DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 364 343 PS 021 899

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|---|---|
| AUTHOR | Copple, Carol |
| TITLE | Ready To Learn: Early Childhood Education and the Public Schools. |
| INSTITUTION | National School Boards Association, Alexandria, VA. |
| PUB DATE | Sep 90 |
| NOTE | 56p.; This monograph is part of a series of publications on "Today's Issues in Education" and funded through the former NSBA Revenue Sharing Fund. |
| AVAILABLE FROM | National School Boards Association, 1680 Duke Street, Alexandria, VA 22314 ($15, non-members; $12, members; add $3.75 postage and handling). |
| PUB TYPE | Reports - Descriptive (141) |
| EDRS PRICE | MF01/PC03 Plus Postage. |
| DESCRIPTORS | *Boards of Education; Community Involvement; *Early Childhood Education; Educational Policy; *Educational Quality; Family School Relationship; Federal Legislation; *Learning Readiness; National Surveys; Outcomes of Education; Parent Participation; Partnerships in Education; Program Descriptions; *Program Design; *Public Schools; State Legislation |
| IDENTIFIERS | Child Care Costs |

ABSTRACT

In order to help local school boards develop and implement early childhood programs that best serve families in their communities, this monograph chronicles the world of early childhood programs and examines the role of groups and institutions that serve young children, including the public schools, parents, social service agencies, and business. Chapter 1 describes the diverse system for the delivery of programs to young children in the United States, and the role of local communities in that delivery. Chapter 2 discusses the national education goal of school readiness, examines early childhood initiatives of states and the federal government, and describes the work of national organizations and task forces that have addressed the needs of children and families. The results of research on the impact of early childhood education on children's lives are highlighted in chapter 3. Chapter 4 discusses conditions relevant to shaping effective early childhood programs, which include: (1) providing developmentally appropriate education; (2) encouraging parent involvement and providing family support; (3) integrating services; (4) fostering interagency collaboration; (5) providing for staff development; (6) assessing children appropriately; (7) expanding facilities; and (8) increasing funding. The role of school boards at the local, state, and federal levels is discussed in chapter 5. An appendix contains a 41-item bibliography and a list of organizational resources. (SM)

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# READY TO LEARN

## Early Childhood Education and the Public Schools

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# READY TO LEARN

## Early Childhood Education and the Public Schools

September 1990

This monograph is part of a series of publications on "Today's Issues in Education." The series is funded through the former NSBA Revenue Sharing Fund. Money in the fund is used to financially support the development of programs and materials that are proposed by executive directors of state school boards associations. Final selection of projects is based on recommendations by the Federal Member Executive Directors' NSBA Liaison Committee and approval by the NSBA Board of Directors. Of primary importance in considering projects to be supported is the value that the products and materials will have in assisting local lay school boards and their members to perform effectively their key role in governance of public elementary and secondary schools in the nation.

# Foreword

When President Bush and the nation's governors convened to establish goals for education in the United States, early childhood education was top priority. By the year 2000, they said, all children will start school ready to learn. In the spirit of this national goal, local school boards are focusing attention on determining what constitutes the "breakfast of champions" that will nourish and fortify youngsters so that they can prosper academically.

As America's demographic and family patterns continue to change, yesterday's nursery schools and day care centers can no longer serve the needs of our families. We have more toddlers today than we have had since 1968, and more of their mothers than ever before work outside the home. Unprecedented numbers of parents are mere children themselves, needing guidance and education in parenting skills. Furthermore, research indicates that early childhood education can help diminish school attrition, underachievement, youth pregnancy, and the ever-growing maladies of disadvantaged students. It makes good sense to reach these children as early in their development as possible to ensure that physically and mentally, they are prepared to learn.

We've made progress toward quality early childhood education on the local, state, and national levels. However, despite the acknowledged benefits of such programs, nearly half of the nation's 3- to 5-year-olds are not enrolled in preprimary education programs. Less than 35 percent of eligible 4-year-olds are enrolled in Head Start. Given limited resources, the public and private sectors must collaborate to mobilize their communities. Providing the best possible growing and learning environments for our youngsters is an expensive but vital enterprise.

This monograph, *Ready to Learn: Early Childhood Education and the Public Schools,* chronicles the world of early childhood programs, detailing recent local, state, and national initiatives, outcomes of quality programs, and key issues involved in their design. *Ready to Learn* examines the cast of community players who can and do serve young children, including the public schools, parents, social service agencies, and business. We hope the information in this monograph will bolster local school boards' efforts to develop and implement early childhood programs that best serve families in their communities. Schools cannot accomplish the task alone, but their leadership is crucial to success.

Very truly yours,

Martha C. Fricke

Martha C. Fricke
President
National School
Boards Association

Thomas A. Shannon

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Executive Director
National School
Boards Association

# Table of Contents

**CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION** ..... 1

The World of Early Childhood Programs: Who Does What
Local Community Roles

**CHAPTER II: RECENT STATE AND NATIONAL INITIATIVES** ..... 5

National Education Goals
States' Early Childhood Initiatives
Table 2-1: State Initiatives in Early Childhood Education
National Organizations and Task Forces
Federal Legislative Initiatives
Box 2-1: State Preschool and Child Care Legislation

**CHAPTER III: IMPACT OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION** ..... 13

Experimental Early Childhood Programs
Head Start
Public Preschool Programs
Box 3-1: Major Findings at age 19 in the Perry Preschool Study
Research on Preschool Effects: What It Does and Does Not Say

**CHAPTER IV: SHAPING EFFECTIVE EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS** ..... 17

Developmentally Appropriate Education for Young Children
Box 4-1: Family Support and Education Programs
Parent Involvement and Family Education/Support
Box 4-2: Increasing Parent Involvement
Comprehensiveness and Integration of Services
Box 4-3: School of the Twenty-First Century
The Impetus for Collaboration
Box 4-4: Meeting Community Needs in New Ways
Staff Issues
Box 4-5: Watch-and-Do Staff Development
Assessment Issues
Facilities Implications
Table 4-1: Early Childhood Programs: Annual Costs Per Child Under Alternative Assumptions
Costs and Compromises in Fundings in Funding Early Childhod Education
Where Will the Money Come From?
Box 4-6: Business-Financed Facilities at the Work Site: Satellite Learning Centers

**CHAPTER V: IMPLICATIONS FOR LOCAL SCHOOL BOARDS** ..... **37**

School Boards' Role at the Community Level
School Boards' Role at the State and Federal Levels

**APPENDIX** ..... **43**

Bibliography
Other Resources

# CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Today early childhood education is a major national interest for the first time since the 1960s — the era when "compensatory" preschool education was hailed as a way to eradicate poverty and Head Start was born. The early childhood agenda of the 1990s is being shaped by a new set of forces.*

First, the continuing "baby boomlet" and the dramatic increase in mothers of young children in the workforce are producing an unprecedented demand for child care. The under-5 population is the largest since 1968. The workforce participation of women has increased 100 percent since 1970. Nearly 60 percent of U.S. mothers with children of ages 3 to 5 work outside the home, and over half of all mothers of infants go back to work before the child's first birthday. Even more families will need child care with the new welfare reform legislation designed to move people off welfare rolls and into the workplace. These trends all add up to a great many parents wanting programs for their young children.

The rising interest in early childhood programs is also a response to alarming dropout, adolescent pregnancy, drug use and youth crime rates. With these crises intensifying among school-age youth, we intuitively look to the early years of life with the hope that many problems could be prevented by giving children a better start. Research results buttress this intuition, indicating that school failure, unemployment, crime and teen pregnancy can in fact be reduced by high-quality preschool programs.

Education reform has been in full swing since 1983 when the National Commission on Excellence in Education issued its galvanizing report, A Nation at Risk. But only recently has reform shifted in the direction of those children whose life circumstances put them at risk of educational failure. Looking at the record on children who are far behind when they enter school, educators see that few manage to overcome the initial disadvantage. And we come back to the idea that it is better to help children and their families before the children begin school. In his presidential essay for the Carnegie Corporation, David Hamburg voiced the growing national sentiment about children's early years when he called these years "the great leverage point for the human future."

In this climate, the push to improve services for young children and their families is increasing at federal, state and local levels. What is the appropriate role of the school, many are asking, in meeting these needs? And if the school is expected to broaden its services, where will the money come from? In schools, community and state agencies, and even the private sector, people are recognizing that they need to work together to provide the broader range of services needed by children and families and to reduce duplication and fragmentation in delivery of these services.

## The World of Early Childhood Programs: Who Does What

At present we have a diverse, uncoordinated and underfunded system — a virtual nonsystem — for delivering programs to young children. The federal government, the states and various groups in local communities all contribute to the patchwork quilt of services for young children.

* Early childhood education is used here in its broadest sense: the education and care of children from birth to age eight. When only pre-kindergarten or preschool programs are being discussed, this publication will use one of these more restricted terms. It is not productive to try to distinguish between programs that provide for young children's "education" and "child care" -- the term early childhood education encompasses the two closely interrelated functions.

## The federal role

The federal government does not directly operate any programs for young children. It funds early childhood programs through these mechanisms: the Dependent Care Tax Credit, Title XX/Social Service Block Grant (SSBG), Head Start, Chapter 1, and the Education of the Handicapped Act (special education).

Federal funding for Head Start is over $1 billion and serves 450,000 children nationwide. Estimating Title XX/SSBG expenditures is more difficult, but the total appears to exceed $2.5 billion. Estimates for total national expenditures on child care (including the Dependent Care Tax Credit and payments by parents) range from $7 to $13 billion.

For one group of preschool children — handicapped children ages 3 to 5 — federal law requires a "free, appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment," just as it does for students in the K-12 program. Infants and toddlers also are covered, but across-the-board service is not mandatory until the fifth year of the state's participation. This legislation (Education of the Handicapped Act Amendments of 1986) is intended to reduce the number of special education placements and related services in later years.

Recent developments in the federal role with respect to early childhood programs are discussed in the next chapter, "Recent State and National Initiatives."

No state directly operates an early childhood program. Thirty-four states currently fund programs for young children in one or more ways: twelve contribute funds for Head Start; two provide parent education in lieu of direct service to preschool children; and 33 fund pilot or statewide prekindergarten programs. The funding level varies from a high of about $46million in Texas to a low of under $100,000 for Ohio's pilot program. The total state involvement is estimated at $225 million on prekindergarten programs for about 150,000 children (Mitchell, 1988). The next chapter describes more fully the nature of state-level initiatives in early childhood education.

## Local community roles

The situation is more complex at the local level. Some counties and cities fund child care and other forms of early childhood education, and some city and county agencies operate child care programs. Local school districts operate 20 or more different kinds of programs, including the federal and state programs noted above (e.g., Head Start, Chapter 1, special education, subsidized child care, state prekindergarten and parent education programs).

Locally funded programs also include: magnet prekindergartens, bilingual preschools, infant care for teen mothers, and other nursery programs operated by high school students. Though public schools are operating a wide variety of programs for children from birth through age 5, most programs are for 4-year-olds and operate half-day for the school year only.

In the private domain, there are for-profit child care and development programs, which are offered in a variety of settings and recognized by varying names — "day care," "preschool," "nursery school," and "family day care," to name a few. For-profit child care providers range from national chains to individuals who supervise a few children in their homes. Employer-subsidized child care, typically provided at the workplace, is a small but growing option. There are also churches and other non-profit community groups providing a wide array of programs for young children.

Historically, there has been a rift between "educational" programs for young children and "custodial" programs that provide care while parents work. As many early childhood leaders have pointed out, this is a distinction that has outlived its usefulness and should be put aside now that we are in an era where it is clear that the majority of parents need child care and that programs providing this service can also be stimulating and beneficial to children.

Another dispute that still rages is between elementary educators and early childhood personnel outside the schools, each tending to stereotype the other in negative terms. Old battlelines were drawn again when in 1976 the American Federation of Teachers proposed that the public schools control the federally subsidized early childhood and child care programs that were being discussed in Congress, arguing that the schools were dedicated to education, that professionalism would improve the quality of existing care, and that the schools already had a well-developed organizational structure.

Because there was a looming surplus of

teachers, many interpreted this proposal as a self-serving attempt to make jobs for unemployed teachers. The early childhood community rose to the attack, arguing that elementary teachers were inappropriately trained to care for young children and that the schools were rigid and entrenched in an educational approach that would be disastrous for working with preschoolers. The legislation died anyway, but the old dispute was stirred up between early childhood and elementary education.

The same conflict is alive today as the push for early intervention — and the intersecting need for expanded child care services — brings back the question of who will control early childhood programs and what they will be like. In Chapter IV we will take a closer look at the differences in philosophy and method between the two camps — differences that need to be resolved in order to shape effective early childhood policy and programs in the coming decade.

Having taken a brief bird's eye view of the world of early childhood in the United States today, let us now take a closer look at recent developments at the state and federal levels.

# CHAPTER II:
# RECENT STATE AND NATIONAL INITIATIVES

The 1980s saw rapid expansion in state involvement in early childhood education. By the end of the decade there was also sharply increased activity at the federal level. Major task forces and organizations at the national level made recommendations pertaining to early childhood education.

## National Education Goals

The importance of meeting the developmental and educational needs of preschool children was emphasized at the 1989 "Education Summit" in Charlottesville, Virginia, where the President and the state governors met to determine national goals in education. "Readiness" was stated as one of the six national education goals, specifically that "by the year 2000, all children in America will start school ready to learn." Under this goal were listed three objectives:

- *All disadvantaged and disabled children will have access to high quality and developmentally appropriate preschool programs that help prepare children for school.*

- *Every parent in America will be a child's first teacher and devote time each day to helping his or her preschool child learn; parents will have access to the training and support they need.*

- *Children will receive the nutrition and health care needed to arrive at school with healthy minds and bodies, and the number of low birthweight babies will be significantly reduced through enhanced prenatal health systems.*

In describing the changes and restructuring necessary to achieve these goals, the President and the nation's governors agreed that the federal government should work with the states to develop and fully fund early intervention strategies for children. They stated that all eligible children should have access to Head Start, Chapter 1, or some other successful preschool program with strong parental involvement. Specifically, they declared that "our first priority must be to provide at least one year of preschool for all disadvantaged children."

The emphasis placed on preschool education by the President and the governors as a group should add further impetus to the level of activity already underway in the states in seeking to meet the needs of prekindergarten children and their families. In considering appropriate roles and actions for local school boards in early childhood education, it is useful to begin with an overview of these state and national activities.

## States' Early Childhood Initiatives

Until relatively recently states had little experience in shaping early childhood policy and programs. In the 1980s many states began to play a more active role in funding such programs. Since 1979, at least 11 states and New York City have passed legislation to support early childhood programs. In New Jersey, Pennsylvania and the District of Columbia, existing mechanisms to finance the regular school program are being used to support early childhood education. Some states have established programs that seek to enhance young children's development and well-being through reaching parents.

## Box 2-1
## State Preschool and Child Care Legislation

Massachusetts is the first state to address preschool and child care simultaneously rather than with separate legislation and funding streams. The Massachusetts legislation provides Department of Education funding for a variety of options depending on the community's child care needs including: "pre-kindergarten for 3 and 4-year-old children; enhanced kindergarten programs for 3 and 4-year-old children; and programs which seek to develop creative approaches to combining early childhood education and day care. Such combined programs may include but are not limited to: extended day programs, day care programs in schools, day care programs in settings other than school, employer-sponsored day care and others."

The Massachusetts legislation includes other key components:

- Schools may contract with Head Start and child care programs to provide the services;
- The Board of Education must establish a state Office of Early Childhood Education to develop program standards that meet or exceed the existing state Office for Children standards for 3 and 4-year-olds in whole or half-day child care programs; offer schools technical assistance; and work with the Bureau of Teacher Certification to develop certification standards for early childhood teachers;
- The Board of Education must set up an advisory council on Early Childhood Education that includes teachers, parents, and representatives of state human service agencies, higher education, business, and government;
- A school district applying for funds must establish a local advisory board composed of a principal, teacher, parent, and representatives of local community agencies concerned with the welfare of young children;
- Money for expanded kindergarten programs can be spent on expanding programs to cover a half-day, attaching a parent outreach component, or improving staff:child ratios. Early childhood day care programs can add before-school and after-school components.

Illinois's preschool legislation also makes an attempt to take into account families' need for child care. In 1986 the state approved $12.1 million for school districts requesting funds to start up prekindergarten classes for 3- to 5-year-olds at risk of academic failure and to establish full-day kindergarten programs. Schools can subcontract with non-profit groups to run the programs. Districts can request funds to run prekindergarten programs longer than half a day. The state also enacted an open-ended appropriation for school districts to establish full-day kindergartens provided they maintain their half-day programs.

Texas spends the largest amount on preschool services — about $65 million annually — and serves the most children — close to 50,000. Legislation passed in 1984 mandates that school districts offer a part-day preschool program for 4-year-olds of limited English proficiency or from low-income families. With such a large number of children in need of preschool services and limited funds, Texas allowed a staff:child ratio of one adult for 22 4-year-olds. Unfortunately, program benefits to young children drop off sharply.

Still other states have formed commissions to study the options for implementing early childhood programs, and some of these have funded pilot programs. A number of governors, mayors, state education commissioners and other prominent leaders have put their weight behind early childhood initiatives. The National Governors' Association has supported early childhood programs as critical "to help at-risk children to succeed in meeting the new educational requirements," and the Council of Chief State School Officers has issued a strong call for action in early childhood and family education.

Growth of the list of states funding prekindergarten programs peaked between 1985 and 1987 and now has slowed. To date, a total of 33 states and the District of Columbia give financial support to early childhood programs. These include states with only small pilot programs, those that fund parent education in lieu of direct services to children, and those that contribute additional funding to Head Start.

Table 2.1 provides a brief state-by-state description of initiatives in early childhood education as of 1988. Clearly there is tremendous variation in the size, scope and nature of state programs. Here is a quick overview of how the state early childhood initiatives look on various dimensions.

### Which children are served?

At this point, state prekindergarten programs are about equally divided between those serving only 4-year-olds and those serving 3- to 5-year-olds. About two-thirds are targeted for children at risk, which may be defined in terms of low income, limited English proficiency, or school readiness deficiencies.

### Who provides services?

About half the states funding early childhood programs permit only school districts to receive funding; the others either permit school districts to subcontract with private agencies or make direct contracts with private agencies. Responsibility for the prekindergarten programs lies with the state education (or public instruction) department in all but a few states.

### Length of day

The majority (60%) of state prekindergarten programs operate on a half-day basis. About a quarter of the state programs permit either a half-day or a full school day. Only five states (Florida, Illinois, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Vermont) permit service for the full working day, and few full working day programs have been funded.

### Quality and comprehensiveness of services

Only five states permit more than 10 children per staff member, and some require an even lower ratio. About half require teachers to have training or certification or both in early childhood education. About half the states' early childhood efforts mandate comprehensive programs similar to the Head Start model, which includes a cognitive component and a variety of services to promote children's physical, social and emotional well-being (e.g., health, social services, and parent participation requirements). The rest either have no curricular requirements or focus primarily on cognitive curricula.

### Funding

The states funding some kind of early childhood services are about evenly divided between those funding at or below $2 million a year and those funding above that level. Per child expenditures range from more than $5,000 in Alaska to just over $500 in Pennsylvania. As shown in Table 2.1, the three most populous states — Texas, California and New York — serve the largest number of children, with the state expenditure per child varying from $850 in Texas to $2500 in New York, reflecting both real differences in cost per child and differences in proportion of state funds to local funds.

Among the smaller state efforts, in terms of total funding, are those in Delaware, Ohio, and West Virginia, all at less than $300,000 a year. The per child expenditures of approximately $1,200 in West Virginia and $1,900 in Delaware reflect the smaller number of children being served in these states. Up to 1988, the efforts of the 27 states and the District of Columbia amounted to roughly $225 million for state funding of early childhood programs.

In some states, funds for early childhood education programs are distributed to local programs through a grant proposal process. In these states, public schools and other appropriate agencies apply directly to the state fiscal agency administering the funds; grants are generally awarded on a competitive basis.

Other states distribute funds to early childhood programs using a standard formula for public school aid or other specified costs and allocate state funds directly to the local schools. Some states require a local or federal match for early childhood education programs, and others restrict the use of state dollars to specific program elements (e.g., staff salaries and staff overhead costs).

### Coordination

In almost all states there is some state-level coordinating body representing state agencies and, in some cases, citizens and parents. Yet fewer than one-third of the states have legislative or regulatory requirements regarding coordination at the local level, e.g., among different services for children. Lack of local-level coordination results in competition between Head Start and state prekindergarten programs for children, staff and space. No state has moved to coordinate funding across programs. However, most state initiatives are fairly new, and coordination is likely to improve with growing experience in planning and administering state programs.

## National Organizations and Task Forces

From the mid-1980s to the present, a number of national organizations and commissions have addressed the needs of children and families, sometimes focusing on certain populations such as children at risk of educational failure, and have come up with recommendations and other policy statements pertaining to early childhood education. Typically, these organizations have convened special task forces or policy panels on early childhood education, at-risk children, and other related topics. Some took testimony from a wide array of sources. From these national forums and reports have come sweeping and comprehensive recommendations for action and policy change. The National School Boards Association (NSBA) offers its recommendations in the recent publication, Education Reform for the '90s: The School Board Agenda.

In addition to NSBA, groups that have stressed the importance of early childhood education include the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE), the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), the Committee for Economic Development (CED), the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), the National Governors' Association (NGA), the Child Welfare League of America (CWLA), and the Early Intervention Action Group of the Office of Education Research Improvement (OERI) Urban Superintendents' Network.

Given the collective experience of these groups and the influence they have at the state and local levels, it is instructive to examine what they have to say about where we should be going in early childhood education and child care. The visions of the national education and early childhood leadership will certainly play a role in shaping future developments in educating and caring for young children in the United States.

Many of the early childhood issues addressed by national groups and forums are discussed on an issue-by-issue basis in Chapter IV ("Shaping Effective Early Childhood Programs"). Though there are differences in content and emphasis from group to group, there is substantial consensus on the importance of the early childhood years and on the general direction which early childhood education and child care should take.

Most groups have explicitly recommended the provision of "comprehensive services" as part of early childhood programs. Though groups vary somewhat in what they would include among such services, they usually specify at least health and nutrition services to children and social services to families.

Nearly all groups have emphasized the importance of "developmentally appropriate" early childhood programs, that is, programs must fit the developmental needs of the age group and the individual child. As the NASBE Task Force states: "Thinking, in young children, is directly tied to their interactions with people and materials. Young children learn best and most by actively exploring their environment, using hands-on materials and building upon their natural curiosity and desire to make sense of the world around them."

It is repeatedly emphasized that effective preschool programs must provide for active, experience-based learning. Virtually all national organizations concerned with education and young children, as well as the leaders in the early childhood field, have warned that a traditional school program that focuses solely on cognitive and academic skills is inappropriate for young children.

The national task forces and associations call for more collaboration between schools and the other agencies serving children and families.

State-level interagency collaboration is urged in planning, standard setting and program development. At the community level, schools are exhorted to form partnerships with human service providers who serve at-risk children and families. It is stressed that coalitions of business, education and human services will help in securing funding and ensuring access in provision of comprehensive services.

The numerous commissions, expert panels and professional groups looking at early childhood also have agreed on many specific issues with respect to staff compensation and training, assessment and evaluation, and funding. The whole range of issues in early childhood education is discussed in Chapter IV.

## Federal Legislative Initiatives

In 1990, Congress renewed its past efforts to reach consensus on a child care bill. The House of Representatives passed a three-part bill known as the Early Childhood Education and Development Act. It encompassed (1) an expanded Head Start program (to add a day-care component and raise the family income eligibility cap), (2) school-based before- and after-school care and early childhood education, and (3) incentives to increase the availability of day care as well as subsidization of child care for low-income famililies. The Senate -passed bill, the Act for Better Child Care (known as the ABC bill), aimed at the expansion of the supply of child care services and subsidation of child care for low-income families — that is, a bill comparable to the third component of the House bill. Each bill included complex tax revisions as a method of supporting day care.

NSBA supports the first two components of the House Bill. Head Start has been proven to be a successful school readiness program for at-risk children. The school-based program would be administered by the local school district, which may choose to run such a program itself or contract with other public or private agencies.

Both the House and Senate versions of the child care component permit federal funds to be used for sectarian programs. NSBA and other education organizations believe such an approach is unconstitutional because it does not maintain separation of church and state. NSBA would not, however, oppose allocation of funds to a program run by a sectarian agency (e.g., a church) so long as the program itself is non-sectarian and non-discriminatory.

A House-Senate conference committee has resolved many areas of disagreement between the House and Senate bills and is expected to develop a compromise on the tax issues over the next several months. Conferees have agreed that any compromise bill presented to the House and Senate will include all three components of the House bill, as modified by the conference committee.

NSBA will remain active in advocating appropriate legislation and will inform the membership of any pertinent developments in child care and early childhood education.

# Box 2-2
# A Summary of State-Funded Prekindergarten Initiatives Through FY 88

| *State* | *Population Served* | *Hours of Operation* | *No. of Children Served* | *Resources* | *Ratios* | *ECE Training* | *Method of Funding* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Alaska enacted 1983 | 3- and 4-year-olds Head Start eligibility | Half day; 5 villages | 45 (FY87) | $197,000 (FY88) $250,000 (FY87) | Unknown | Unknown | Targeted grants for Head Start-like programs |
| California enacted 1966 | 3- to 5-year-olds (low-income) | Half day; 185 contracts; 500 + sites | 19,221 (FY88) | $35.5 million (FY88 estimate) | 1:8 | Unknown | Reimbursement on average daily attendance; contracts with school district which may subcontract; grants may also go directly to private nonprofits |
| Delaware enacted 1986 | 4-year-olds | Half day; 3 pilot programs (FY88) | 99 (FY88) | $189,000 (FY88) | 1:8 | Unknown | Competitive grants, school districts only |
| Florida state funds used to supplement migrant program since 1981 | 3- and 4-year-old migrant children | Full school day; 18 programs | 2,579 (FY86) 2,540 (FY87) | $2.9 million (FY88) | 1:10 | No | Districts may subcontract to nonprofits; 60% state funds, 40% federal funds |
| Florida enacted 1986 begun 1986-1987 | 3- and 4-year-olds targeted at risk only | Half or full day including full working day; 19 districts (FY88) | 1,000 (FY88) | $1.6 million (FY88) | Local option, 1:10 recommended | Yes | Project grants to school districts; may subcontract |
| Illinois enacted 1985 begun 1/86 | 3- to 5-year-olds at risk of academic failure | Half or full day including full working day; 97 programs (FY88) | 7,400 (FY87) | $12.7 million (FY88) | 1:8 preferred, may not exceed 1:10 | Yes | Project grants; no local match; may subcontract to nonprofits |
| Kentucky parent and child education enacted 1986 | 3- and 4-year-olds at risk | Half and full day; 12 districts, 18 classrooms | 270 (FY87-88) | $900,000 (FY88) | 1:7.5 | No | Competitive grants to school districts; eligibility based on district with 60% or more adults without high school diploma |
| Kentucky innovation grants enacted 1986 | 3- and 4-year-olds at risk | 3 programs (FY87-88) | 280 (FY87-88) | $232,123 (FY87-88) | Unknown | Unknown | Competitive grants to school districts; may be subcontracted |
| Louisiana enacted 1985 begun fall 1985 | 4-year-olds at risk | Most full day; 50 of 66 districts, 71 classes (FY88) | 1,272 (FY88) | $1.8 million (FY88) | 1:10 with aide 1:15 without | No | Project grants; up to 4 per district; no local match |
| Maine innovative grants enacted 1984 | 4-year-olds at risk | Half day | | $27,730 (FY88) | 1:15 recommended | No | Competitive 1-year grants to teachers or districts |
| Maine enacted 1984 | 4-year-olds | Most half day; one full day; 5 districts (FY88) | 167 | | 1:15 recommended | No | School districts only reimbursed under school aid formula after second year of program |

| *State* | *Population Served* | *Hours of Operation* | *No. of Children Served* | *Resources* | *Ratios* | *ECE Training* | *Method of Funding* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Maryland enacted 1979 | 4-year-olds at risk | Half day: 15 districts, 72 classes (FY88) | 2,820 (FY88) | $3.3 million (FY88) | 1:10 | Yes | Project grants; selection based on low 3rd grade test scores |
| Massachusetts enacted 1985 begun fall 1986 | 3- to 5-year-olds, low-income | Half or full day, including full working day; 121 programs (FY87); 56 pre-K and day care | | $10.3 million (FY88) | 1:7.5 | Yes | Competitive grants to districts; may subcontract; 75% of funds to low-income districts |
| Michigan pilot project began Jan. 1986 | 4-year-olds at risk | Most half day; 29 programs (FY87) | 800 (FY87) | $1 million (FY87) $300,000 (FY88) | 1:8 | Yes | Competitive grants to school districts; 30% local match; may subcontract with school operated Head Start only |
| Michigan enacted 1987 | 4-year-olds living in districts meeting funding formula requirements | Half day | | $2 million (FY88) | 1:8 | Yes | Only school districts which meet state funding formula requirements |
| Minnesota parent ed. enacted 1974 | 0-5 years old | Less than half day, once per week; 280 districts | 72,000 (FY88 est.) | $22 million (FY88) | 1:10 | Yes | Public school districts (subcontracting allowed) |
| Missouri parent ed. enacted 1981 | 0-3 years old | 4 home visits per year; 543 districts | 51,000 (FY88 est.) | $12 million (FY88) | Home visit program | Yes | Public school districts (subcontracting allowed) |
| New Jersey since 1903 | 4-year-olds | Half day 72 school districts (FY87) | 5,794 (FY87) | $6.9 million (estimated FY87) | 1:25 | No, but most teachers have nursery school endorsement | School district regular school aid formula based on enrollment |
| New Jersey enacted 1987 begun Nov. 1987 | 3- to 5-year-olds at risk; Head Start requirement | Full working day, full year | | $1 million (FY88) | 1:10 | Yes | Allocation by county & competitive grants to programs; priority to Head Start but school districts and non-profits may apply; matching requirement determined by county; range 10-25% |
| New York enacted 1966 | 3- and 4-year olds; 90% low-income | Most half day; 90 districts (FY88) | 12,000 (FY88) | $27 million (FY88) | 1:7.5 | No | Project grants via a proposal process; 11% local match; new programs limited to half day only |
| Ohio enacted 1985-1986 | 3- to 5-year-olds | Half or full day pilot models; 8 districts (FY87); 3 programs (FY88) | | $18,000 (FY88) | 1:12 (3 years); 1:14 (4- to 5-year-olds) | No | Project grants via RFP to school districts; new programs half day only |
| Oklahoma enacted 1980 | 4-year-olds | Half or full day; 37 programs (FY88) | 1,400 (FY88) | $832,275 (FY88) | 1:10 | Yes | Project grants via RFP to school districts; maximum grant per district $27,000 |
| Oregon passed 1987 implemented 1988-1989 | 3- and 4-year-olds; 80% must meet Head Start eligibility | Half day | 300 (FY88) | 1.1 million (FY88-89) | Unknown | Unknown | Competitive grants to school districts which may subcontract; direct contracts permitted |

| State | Population Served | Hours of Operation | No. of Children Served | Resources | Ratios | SCE Training | Method of Funding |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pennsylvania since 1965 | 4-year-olds | Half day; 9 districts (FY87) | 3,260 (FY87) | $1.7 million (FY87 estimate) | Local option | Unknown | State aid formula for kindergarten used |
| South Carolina enacted 1984; Chapter 1 funding since 1971 | 4-year-olds with deficient "readiness" based on individual assessment | Half day; 86 districts (FY88) | 10,715 (FY88) | $10.9 million (FY88) | 1:10 recommended | Yes | Allocation to districts based on students "not ready"; districts may subcontract |
| Texas enacted 1984 began fall 1985 | 4-year-olds; low-income or limited English proficiency | Half day; 405 districts (FY86) | 48,000 (87) 54,493 (88) | $37.6 million (FY87); $46.2 million (FY88) | 1:22 | Yes, with exemptions | Formula allocation; matching grant based on local property value |
| Vermont enacted 1987 | 3- and 4-year-olds at risk; low-income, limited English proficiency; other handicapping conditions | Half or full day, including full work day | 250 (FY88 est.) | $500,000 (FY88) maximum $30,000 per grant | 1:10 | No | Competitive grants based on RFP; preference to communities without other early childhood programs; grants to school districts which may subcontract; direct contracts permitted |
| Washington enacted 1985 | 4-year-olds; Head Start eligibility | Half day | 2,000 (FY88) | $4.7 million (FY88); $6.2 million (FY89) | 1:6 | Yes | Competitive grants to school districts; Head Start and private nonprofits |
| District of Columbia enacted 1968 | 4-year-olds | 117 full day + 27 half day (FY87) 170 full day (FY88) | 3,444 (FY88) | $12.2 million (FY88) | 1:10 half day, 1:15 full day with aide | Yes | Local district regular school aid formula; used Chapter 1 funds prior to 1982 |
| West Virginia programs operated since 1972* | 3- and 4-year-olds at risk and low-income | Half day and full day 6 programs* | 215 (FY86) | $258,574 (FY86) | 1:15 | Yes | 4 programs are run by the DOE as fiscal agent; 2 are by counties under contract with DOE |
| Wisconsin enacted 1985 | 4-year-olds | Half day 25 districts (FY87) | 5,850 (FY88 est.) | $4.3 million (FY88) | 1:20 recommended | No, local option | State aid formula to local districts; average local contribution is 52% |

* School code revised in 1983 to permit local county school boards to establish prekindergarten programs for children under age 5. The programs listed are those not primarily for handicapped children.

Source: Bank Street College of Education, 1990.

# CHAPTER III:
# IMPACT OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

A growing body of research suggests that high-quality early childhood education has positive short-term and long-term effects, at least in the case of disadvantaged children.

## Experimental Early Childhood Programs

What early childhood education can produce under the best of circumstances is demonstrated in research on the model programs that proliferated in the 1960s and early 1970s. Eleven of the best of these programs formed the Consortium for Longitudinal Studies during the mid-1970s, agreeing to find as many of their original subjects as possible and collect a standard set of information on their subsequent development and performance. Of the nearly 3,600 children who had originally attended the 11 preschool programs, over 2,000 children from age 9 to 19 were located for the 1976 follow-up. In the second follow-up in 1979-80, the children were between 12 and 22 years of age.

The Consortium reported these findings:

- **Special education placement:** 13 percent of program children versus 31 percent of control children were placed in special education at some point in their school careers.

- **Grade retention:** 32 percent of program children versus 47 percent of controls were retained in grade at some point in their school careers.

- **High school graduation:** 65 percent of program children versus 52 percent of controls completed secondary school.

As for the impact of preschool on "real-life" outcomes such as teen pregnancy, crime and unemployment, the evidence is not yet compelling, but it is important. (Box 3-1 describes the project that has generated much of the information on outcomes outside of school, the Perry Preschool Project in Ypsilanti, Michigan). Considering the intractable nature of these problems — and how costly they are in economic and human terms — the research evidence is strong enough to merit attention and further research.

- **Teen pregnancy:** Only two projects (Perry Preschool Project and one in Tennessee) looked at teen pregnancy, and results were not clear-cut. But results suggested that girls who had attended preschool had a lower rate of pregnancy as well as a greater likelihood of returning to high school after a pregnancy than control girls.

- **Crime:** The Perry Preschool Project was the only one that gathered such data, and it found that 31 percent of the preschool attendees had been arrested or detained by age 19, as compared to 51 percent of control children. More than twice as many control children had been arrested three or more times or had arrests for nonminor crimes. A non-Consortium project (Lally et al.) also found that, as compared to preschool graduates, controls were more often in the courts, committed more serious crimes and showed higher recidivism.

- **Use of welfare programs:** One project (Perry) found strong evidence that teenagers who had attended preschool used fewer public services than controls. Another project did not find less welfare use among preschool graduates.

# Box 3-1
# Major Findings at Age 19 in the Perry Preschool Study

| Category | Number Responding | Preschool Group | No Preschool Group |
|---|---|---|---|
| Employed | 121 | 59% | 32% |
| High school graduation (or its equivalent) | 121 | 67% | 49% |
| College or vocational training | 121 | 38% | 21% |
| Ever detained or arrested | 121 | 31% | 51% |

Source: *Changed Lives: The Effects of the Perry Preschool Program on Youths Through Age 19*, 1984.

## The Perry Preschool Program

Approximately 100 children eligible for preschool programs between 1962 and 1967 took part in the Perry Preschool Program in Ypsilanti, Michigan. All were from extremely poor minority families and each was judged to have a low intelligence quotient. Almost half the children lived in single-parent homes, and fewer than 20 percent of the parents had completed high school. Half of the children were randomly assigned to the preschool program; the other half, also randomly chosen, did not participate in any kind of preschool program. The students in both groups have been closely monitored for over fifteen years. This means that any differences between the two groups can reliably be attributed to the effects of the program.

The program was directed at the intellectual and social development of the participating 3 and 4-year-olds. For one school year, from October to May, the students were in class for two and a half hours each morning, Monday through Friday. There was one adult teacher for every five or six children, and teachers made home visits to each mother and child for approximately one and a half hours each week. Those who administered the tests, interviews, and follow-up studies over the years did not know which children had been in the preschool program. Their analysis revealed significant differences in the achievement of both academic and social skills at age nineteen between those who did and those who did not participate in the preschool program fifteen years earlier. Employment and college or vocational training rates for the preschool group were almost double; the high school graduation rate was almost one-third higher; arrest rates were 40 percent lower; and teenage pregnancy rates were almost half. Furthermore, on a test of functional competence those who went through the program were more than 50 percent more likely to score at or above the national average and to have spent only half as many years in special education programs as those who did not.

Source: Committee for Economic Development, Investing in Our Children: Business and the Public Schools, 1985, p. 47.

- **Employment:** One project (Perry) found that children who had attended preschool later had higher rates of employment and higher earnings than controls. Other projects following up on employment did not find a significant preschool effect.

Consortium results were not all positive. The strong gains on IQ and achievement tests after preschool gradually declined over the early grades. But as a group, the Consortium studies are encouraging about the effects of high-quality preschool programs.

The Consortium studies demonstrate unequivocally that high-quality preschool programs can produce an immediate boost to children's intellectual performance and reduce their rate of placement in special education classes. They provide moderate evidence that quality preschool programs reduce grade retention and increase the probability of high school graduation. A few studies suggest benefits into adolescence and beyond, such as reduced crime, unemployment, welfare dependence and teen pregnancy.

We must bear in mind that the Consortium projects were conducted under ideal conditions. All the programs were characterized by careful planning and monitoring, ample budgets, and capable staffs with lots of training. Parent involvement was unusually high, and project staff often kept in touch with families after children had left the program. While one cannot conclude that the benefits produced by these exemplary programs would necessarily be produced in preschool programs in public schools across the United States, the Consortium results tell us what can be accomplished under optimal conditions.

## Head Start

Since Head Start is a large-scale nationwide program with quality varying widely across sites, it approximates the situation of public school preschools more closely than do the small-scale model programs. Head Start has undergone considerable research; unfortunately Head Start studies cannot be as tightly controlled as small-scale experimental studies. As in the model programs, substantial gains in intellectual performance and socioemotional behavior have been found by the end of the Head Start year, and these gains have been found to dissipate within a few years. There is modest evidence that Head Start reduces special education placement and grade retention and improves school attendance.

Because Head Start programs typically select for admission the children with the greatest need, the standard practice of using waiting list children for comparison may have caused Head Start effects to be consistently underestimated in the past. A recent reanalysis of Head Start data, taking this selection tendency into account, shows significant effects of the preschool experience on children's school readiness, particularly for the children who start out with the lowest performance.

It should be noted that some of Head Start's most important effects lie outside the cognitive domain. For instance, Head Start health services are widely recognized as benefiting children. The parent involvement component, by strengthening the parenting skills and self-esteem of many parents, aims at improving the home environment of their children over the long term.

## Public Preschool Programs

Only a few of the state programs have been evaluated. In New York State, the State Department of Education conducted a longitudinal evaluation of the prekindergarten program, a relatively large program in which more than 2,800 children in 72 schools across 21 districts participated in 1986-87. It was found that children who attend prekindergarten in comparison to similar children who do not:

- enter kindergarten having acquired more of the knowledge and skills needed for coping with school tasks;
- show greater knowledge of verbal concepts across grades;
- receive higher ratings on social competency;
- show greater task orientation, according to teacher ratings;
- are more likely to make normal progress through the primary grades; and

- are less often retained or placed in special education classes.

Investigation of the efficacy of South Carolina's statewide preschool program for at-risk 4-year-olds included a look at whether variations in program quality from classroom to classroom affected child outcomes. Each classroom was required to have no more than a 1:10 ratio of staff to children, to have a teacher certified in early childhood education, and to use a cognitive-developmental curriculum that has been widely implemented. The children who had attended the preschool program were significantly more successful in two respects: (1) their rate of compensatory class placement was lower; and (2) more children scored above the kindergarten readiness cutoff. "Quality of implementation" — the extent to which the curriculum was implemented in each classroom — was found to vary widely and clearly to relate to program efficacy. This study provides evidence that statewide public preschool programs can be effective.

## Research on Preschool Effects: What It Does and Does Not Say

Nearly all of the evidence cited as support for expanding early childhood education is based on programs that had certain elements, most notably low staff:child ratios, teachers with early childhood training, and parent involvement. The importance of these features also has been documented in separate studies. For instance, the National Day Care Study found that with staff:child ratios higher than 1:10, program quality deteriorates.

The available literature documents effects for children from low-income families. In fact, some studies suggest that the more disadvantaged the children, the greater the gains. The impact of preschool on middle-class children is less clear; it has been investigated less frequently, and results have been mixed.

Research on preschool experience also has been focused on a particular age group — 3- to 5-year-olds — and does not provide a clear message about effects on infants and toddlers. Certainly there is no evidence about the impact of large public programs on younger age groups since there have been no such programs in this country.

Fewer studies have been done on effects of parent education, partially because the impact of programming directed at parents on children's well-being and learning is very difficult to assess. Some studies, including research on Head Start and the evaluation of the New York State Prekindergarten Program, have found that when parents are more involved in the program, their children score better on measures of cognitive performance. It is unclear whether this difference is actually a result of the parent involvement, or whether such factors as parental concern for the child's education lead to both parent involvement and child achievement.

No one doubts that a positive impact on parenting skills and parents' understanding of child development would benefit children over time. However, not much is known about what kinds of programs have what kinds of effects on parents — and ultimately, on children.

The final caveat about available research evidence is perhaps the most important: it does not say that preschool programs — even the most exemplary programs ever operated — can eliminate all the effects of disadvantage on at-risk children. Compared to their middle-class peers, in fact, poor children as a group still have problems with school, often very serious problems. For instance, the Consortium studies reported significantly reduced dropout rates, but 35% of students who had attended the model preschools still dropped out. Of course, one lesson from the fading away of many post-preschool gains is that education does not stop at age five; subsequent schooling must be up to the task of maintaining and extending the gains that children make.

The bottom line of preschool research is that at-risk children do benefit from high-quality programs. Some children show substantial long-term gains; many benefit enough to keep from being retained or placed in special education. Though there is still much work to be done on the cost-effectiveness of early childhood education (see Chapter IV), even a modest long-term impact on children and families is a good investment for society.

# CHAPTER IV:
# SHAPING EFFECTIVE EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS

As school boards look at their communities and consider how to respond to the educational needs of young children and child care needs of parents, they should not do so in isolation. It is important for school boards to work closely with the early childhood community and other providers of services to young children and families to assess community needs and consider what the respective roles of the schools and other providers should be. The schools and other providers should work as a team, together with representatives of business, parents and community leaders, to determine what they want for children in their community and to work towards fulfilling this vision.

This collaboration can succeed only as participants come to understand and respect the differences in their varying perspectives. For starters, the public schools — newcomers to the early childhood arena — must recognize that in the early childhood community there is a rich body of knowledge and experience about how young children learn and develop and how to enhance their development.

And educators need to understand why the early childhood community as a whole is skeptical about the idea of public school prekindergarten programs. There are historical reasons and obvious "turf" reasons, but most fundamentally there is a gulf between early childhood and school professionals in philosophy and educational model. This gulf can best be understood by looking at a typical early childhood program and a typical elementary classroom.

## Developmentally Appropriate Education for Young Children

The typical early childhood program looks something like this: Children move among different activity centers, and there is a relatively high noise level. At certain points the teacher may bring all the children together in a circle time for purposes such as explaining classroom rules and routines, introducing an outside visitor, reading a story, or talking together about a field trip. One objective of these times is to give children experience with sitting in one place and listening to one person at a time — either the teacher or a peer. But it is assumed that this quiet, passive mode is not a natural one for young children and should not constitute much of their day. Most of the time children are active and free to choose their own activities.

Teachers circulate to help children get involved in activities, if needed. They see themselves not as "instructors" but guides and facilitators — giving encouragement, providing help where it is needed, making comments and asking questions to provoke children's thinking and spark curiosity and creativity.

Teachers also help maintain order — redirecting the child who is causing problems in the block corner, encouraging two children to work through their conflict over a toy, giving someone who keeps breaking the "no running" rule a "time-out." Peer interactions are seen as one of the most valuable avenues of learning for children, as well as being important for their social development. Part of the teacher's role is to help children learn to cooperate and to solve their conflicts in acceptable ways.

To the untrained observer, such a classroom seems to have little planning or structure, but structure is pervasive if not overt. There is planning and deliberation behind the arrangement of the classroom, the choice of materials and activities, the progression of activities through the day, and the teacher's interactions with the children.

# Box 4-1
# Family Support and Education Programs

Family support and education programs vary widely, but all do certain things: provide opportunities for parents to learn about children's development; provide formal and informal support to families; emphasize family strengths rather than deficits; and emphasize prevention and family maintenance rather than remediation. Three of the pioneers in family support and education programs are Kentucky, Minnesota, and Missouri.

Kentucky is unique in developing parent education and family support programs within the context of an adult literacy program in the public schools. Known as Parent and Child Education (PACE), the program has pilot programs in a total of 18 classrooms in 12 school districts. Eligibility is limited to parents without a high school diploma or equivalency certificate and with 3- and 4-year-old children.

Services include a preschool program based on the High/Scope model; joint parent-child activities with emphasis on how children learn; GED tutoring for parents; and support groups for parents on issues related to self-esteem and competence. In two years of operation, PACE served approximately 700 parents and children at a cost of about $800 each. Seventy percent of the adults either have received a GED or added two years to their grade equivalency. Children have measurably raised their developmental level.

Minnesota has been involved in family education longer than any other state, with a 10-year pilot stage prior to 1984 legislation allowing for statewide implementation. At that time, Community and Adult Education assumed responsibility for the program with a statewide funding formula. In FY 1988, funding consisted of $7.5 million in state aid and $10.7 million in property tax revenue. Local districts may charge participants reasonable fees but must waive fees for those unable to pay. Funding may also be received from other sources such as foundations, federal grants, and state vocational-technical aid.

Parents are viewed as the primary participants in the Minnesota program. Local services and activities vary, but the most common form of programming is a weekly class for parents with a simultaneous class for children. Services also include home visits for outreach and education/support, newsletters, access to toys and books, and special programs for certain populations (e.g., single parents, teen parents, Southeast Asian immigrants). All children from birth to kindergarten and their parents are eligible, along with expectant parents, and special efforts are made to recruit low-income families and those experiencing stress.

Missouri is the only state with a statutory mandate to provide parent education and family support in every school district. The state reimburses local districts for 30 percent of eligible families; school district and in-kind funds are provided at local discretion. Parents with children 0-3 are eligible for services. Like Minnesota, Missouri has universal eligibility, but special efforts are made to enroll parents of newborns and at-risk families.

Offering the program -- called Parents as Teachers (PAT) -- through the public school system has the advantage of communicating to families that their participation will enhance the child's future school success. And schools, in turn, are obliged to maintain support and contact after the child turns three.

The hallmark of PAT is the home visit, scheduled at four to six week intervals. These visits are designed to give parents the information and educational guidance to enhance children's physical, social and intellectual development and to reduce stress and increase the pleasures of parenting. A systematic evaluation of the pilot phase found that PAT children had better intellectual, language and social development than controls, and PAT parents knew more about child development and had more positive feelings about the school district.

For more information, contact:

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Elementary classrooms look and sound quite different from the typical early childhood program. Though there is considerable variation, most would approximate this basic profile: Classes are larger, and the number of students per teacher is two or three times the ratio in early childhood programs. The bulk of the school day is devoted to lessons taught by teachers and to seatwork that students can do quietly at their own desks.

Children may have some freedom to go to activity centers when they have finished assigned lessons, but they have much less freedom to choose the types of those activities. Small group learning activities are sometimes used, but only for teacher-defined purposes and with teacher direction. Students have little interaction with peers inside the classroom, and the noise level is expected to be much lower than in preschool programs.

In elementary school, there are discrete subjects to be taught — reading, writing, arithmetic, science, social studies — and the scheduling of subjects tends to stay the same from day to day. The emphasis is placed squarely on children's cognitive development and learning, in contrast to most early childhood programs, which give considerable weight to social and emotional development along with cognitive development.

Of course, different educational methods are appropriate for different ages. As more public schools add prekindergarten programs, what early childhood advocates fear is that these programs will extend downward, with minor modifications, the mode of instruction used for elementary students. In fact, this fear has already been realized in many kindergarten classes. And there are some public school prekindergarten programs (as well as private preschool programs) that are nearly as structured and "academic" as elementary classrooms.

On the other hand, most of the state preschool programs, which are generally situated in public schools, are not using the traditional elementary model without modifying it for 4-year-olds. The typical public school prekindergarten has a staff:child ratio of no more than 1:10 and a teacher certified in early childhood education. The classroom environment allows for more active and hands-on learning than in the elementary grades.

We currently lack adequate information about *what goes on in public school prekindergarten* classrooms around the country, so we do not know how close they actually come to good early childhood practice as described above. Undoubtedly, there is room for improvement. Yet existing programs show that public schools are not locked into their traditional modes of instruction. Most schools providing prekindergarten programs, it appears, have at least attempted to respond to the different developmental needs of younger children and to operate early childhood programs that are quite different from the standard elementary model.

As the public schools move into preschool education, educators need to consider additional elements of high-quality early childhood practice in shaping programs for young children.

## Parent Involvement and Family Education/Support

A major boon of public school preschool programs is the chance for schools to establish good relationships with parents while children are young. With preschoolers, grades are not an issue, and there tends to be less pressure on the parent-school relationship. Since parents are not as likely to worry about children's performance in the early childhood program, teachers and principals have a good opportunity to build parents' self-esteem and comfort in the school setting.

With parent involvement as with the basic educational approach, elementary education and early childhood programs have divergent traditions. "Parent involvement" in the public schools usually means newsletters, the PTA, parent nights, parent-teacher conferences, and mothers and fathers helping out on field trips, holidays and other special events. In preschool programs there is a strong tradition of parent involvement that goes well beyond such limited activities.

Those who teach preschool children cannot help but recognize that the family is at the center of the child's life and that parents are a powerful force in the child's development and well-being. As a result, early childhood teachers generally are in close communication with parents. Frequent and informal interaction

comes naturally as parents drop off and pick up children. Also, because teachers have fewer children in their classes, they can get to know parents well.

### Components of effective parent involvement

These natural advantages in the preschool help promote parent involvement, but good early childhood programs do not stop there. Early childhood educators define effective parent involvement in terms of three components:

- parent education, which provides information on child development and works on enhancing parenting skills;
- parent support, which focuses on the parents as individuals and provides social networks and resources for them; and
- parent empowerment, which promotes parents' confidence and control of their lives.

These components of a strong parent -participation program can be promoted through schools doing the following:*

- valuing parents as primary influences in their children's lives and as essential partners in the education of their children;
- recognizing that parental self-esteem is key to the child's development and should be enhanced by the parents' positive interaction with the school;
- promoting communication between school personnel and parents;
- including parents in decision-making with respect to their own children and with respect to the early childhood program;
- assuring opportunities and access for parents to observe and volunteer in the classroom;
- providing parents with materials and encouragement for working with children at home; and
- providing a gradual and supportive transition process from home to school for those young children entering school for the first time.

While virtually everyone agrees that parents are very important in children's development — and to their school adaptation and progress — in practice, promoting parental involvement and enhancing parenting skills are by no means easy. Parents have hectic schedules, particularly when both are working. Often, the very parents most likely to benefit from experiences that build self-esteem and parenting skills and provide family support are the least likely to get involved. Their time and energy already are stretched to the breaking point, and they often have negative associations with school or with figures of authority. Poor parents in particular live under a great deal of stress and often have severe problems to cope with.

### Working with families

Working with families is too important to be dismissed. But it requires training and experience — as well as time — that teachers often lack. Teachers and administrators need inservice training on parent involvement and family support. Ample time must be provided for teachers to plan and conduct parent conferences and home visits; conference schedules need to include evening hours to accommodate working parents. The schools can encourage local businesses to give parents released time to volunteer in the classroom and participate in parent-teacher conferences.

Of course, the schools cannot tackle all the problems of today's families on their own. They will need to work closely with community agencies that serve families and children and should provide leadership in the development of family support programs. Such programs are most effective when they are an integral part of the school and have sufficient staff and sustained resources. Schools should provide time for teaching staff, administrators and family support staff to work together.

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*This list of suggestions is adapted from Right from the Start: The Report of the NASBE Task Force on Early Childhood Education (1988).

## Box 4-2
## Increasing Parent Involvement

In Guntersville, Alabama, low-income 4-year-olds can only attend the prekindergarten program if their parents agree to come to bi-weekly parent meetings. If there is initial resentment of being required to come, it soon disappears when parents see how much they enjoy the program. A popular activity in each meeting is a brief videotape of a teacher working with the children on a concept. After viewing the tape, parents discuss why the concept is important and how the teacher helps the children learn it.

Then parents make a game or toy to reinforce the concept at home. On one occasion program leaders videotaped a parent work session and showed it to the children. They were highly impressed to see their parents hard at work on a task to help them do well in school. So the turn-about of taping the parents has been continued.

Another interesting feature of the Guntersville program is the "drop-in" home visits on the weekend — with staff in jeans and sneakers — which have been found to be less threatening to parents than scheduled visits.

In St. Louis, Missouri, the Affton and Lindbergh School Districts have teamed up to sponsor an early childhood education program. This self-sustaining program, open year-round, offers comprehensive child care services for children from birth to 12 —for as few as two hours a week or as many as fifty. One of the many noteworthy features of Affton-Lindbergh Early Childhood Education is the wide variety of programs for parents and children (collectively known as The Parent Place).

In the Parent-Toddler program, parents and children participate in activities, both together and separately, and parents spend part of each session talking informally about issues important in the lives of families with toddlers. "Frogs and Tadpoles" is a six-week series of father-child evenings out, which runs three times over the school year. A perennially popular program is the breakfast served to children and parents every Friday from 7:00 to 8:30 a.m. for just 75 cents.

Another innovative program is Partners in Education (PIE) in which parents, as well as grandparents or middle and high school students, can have their volunteer efforts recognized as relevant to getting employment or receiving academic credit. PIE provides volunteers with training, and, if requested, maintains a yearly and ongoing personnel record, provides future work references, and does whatever it can to ensure that the volunteer gets credit for work done and skills acquired. PIE is of particular interest to parents who want to re-enter the job market.

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Teachers have a front-line role to play in identifying children and families who need more intensive help than the schools on their own can provide. All schools personnel need to be well informed of warning signs that suggest a child and family are under a lot of stress, and they need to know whom to contact for help and referral.

Parents' role in young children's development and readiness to do well in school is so critical that several states are focusing their early childhood initiatives on working with parents, either in lieu of or in addition to providing direct services to children. Box 4.1 describes the programs in Kentucky, Minnesota and Missouri. Local school districts also are developing innovative strategies for building partnerships with parents with parents, as illustrated in Box 4.2

## Comprehensiveness and Integration of Services

There are two major ways in which the term "comprehensiveness of services" is being used. One refers to whether programs respond to families' child care needs as well as educational objectives. The other refers to the areas in which services are provided, e.g., health, nutrition, social services. Let us first look at the issues that arise with respect to child care needs and some of the solutions that are evolving.

### Meeting families' child care needs

With nearly 60% of U.S. mothers with children 3 to 5 working outside the home, half-day preschool programs do not meet the needs of many families. While many schools are instituting before-school and after-school child care for school-age children, public school prekindergarten programs typically last only half a day.

Even when the schools provide transportation to and from the program, they drop off children at home but usually not at child care centers. If they did so, the logistics of child care would be more practical for working parents, but there would still be an issue of continuity for children. Preschool children are more unsettled than older children by shifts from place to place, with different teachers and children in each place. Ideally, children would stay in the same facility throughout the day, for child care as well as the preschool program.

Box 4.3 describes Edward Zigler's sweeping proposal for an integrated solution to parents' and children's needs, a plan that has already been implemented in local school districts in a number of states. Box 4.4 cites other districts that are providing child care and education options to meet community needs.

Though the need for more child care services is widespread, specific needs vary from community to community. Before taking action, a school district should determine the needs of parents and children in the community rather than making assumptions about what these needs are. In some areas, for instance, communities invest in "upgrading" half-day programs to full-day programs, only to find that most parents preferred half-day.

### Universal vs. targeted services

As noted in Chapter III, the benefits of preschool programs in improving school success are less certain for middle-class children than for poor children. Actually, most middle-class children attend preschool anyway. By contrast, even with Head Start and other publicly subsidized programs, only a third of 4-year-olds in families with income under $10,000 attend preschool programs. With limited resources, many states are opting for preschool programs targeted to children with the greatest need.

Yet there are many advocates of universal eligibility for early childhood programs. The strongest rationale for universal eligibility is to break down the "two tier system" in which children are segregated by income, with low-income children attending subsidized centers and middle and upper-income children attending fee-for-service programs. This economic segregation often leads to racial segregation.

Because of the astronomical costs of universal access to additional grade levels (for children under five) and services in the schools, it has been suggested that parents could pay for preschool services on a sliding-scale basis. Alternatively, it has been suggested by some policymakers and organizations, e.g., the Council of Chief State School Officers, that we begin by providing for those at risk "with universal access for all children and families as the ultimate goal."

Presently about two-thirds of state prekindergarten programs are targeted for children at risk, which may be defined in terms of family income, limited English proficiency, and/or school readiness deficiencies. Most of the non-targeted programs are in the states with permissive legislation, i.e., funding prekindergarten using state education reimbursement formulas. While states require that school districts meet the at-risk guidelines, few require the screening of individual children.

### Comprehensive services for at-risk children and families

Children living in poverty require more than a basic nursery school program like those their middle class peers might attend. It is increasingly recognized that education cannot be mean-

# Box 4-3
# School of the Twenty-First Century

"Fast forward to the School of the Twenty-First Century. The elementary school's mission now is twofold.

The school building still provides formal schooling for 6- to 12-year-olds, but a second system offers on-site child care for 3- to 5-year-olds, early-morning and after-school care for 6- to 12-year-olds, and full-time care for all children during school vacations." Zigler, E. and Ennis, P. "Child Care: A New Role for Tomorrow's Schools." Principal (September 1988), p. 10.

This child care system, keyed to the developmental needs of all age groups served, includes three outreach programs:

- family support services for parents of newborns
- support for family day care providers in the neighborhood
- information and referral services

The School of the Twenty-First Century is the brainchild of Edward Zigler, one of the founders of Head Start and head of the psychology section of the Yale Child Study Center. And Zigler's School is not just a pipe dream. There are three other states with School of the 21st Century programs; besides the Missouri programs, they are in Hartford, North Branford, and Killingly, Connecticut; in Columbus, Ohio; and Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

The original prototypes for the projected dual-purpose school system are two neighboring Missouri school districts (Independence and Platte Counties), which have been developing this comprehensive care and education system for almost a decade. Their superintendents -- and Zigler himself -- are frequently asked these questions.

### Who runs the School of the Twenty-First Century?

The principal and teachers take responsibility for educating the 6- to 12-year-old group, and they may participate in before-school and after-school care for school-aged students. The school-based program for 3- to 5-year-olds does not offer formal instruction and is directed by an early childhood education specialist. The program is structured to meet the developmental needs of preschoolers.

### Who will pay for the school's expanded care program?

In the Missouri districts, the State Department of Education and two foundations provided grants to help with training and start-up costs. The fee schedule is designed to sustain the program. Zigler envisions the use of sliding-scale fees "until enough women are working so that the nation will not be opposed to a tax for child care."

### Why base the program in the schools?

Zigler argues that the child care system will be more reliable and stable if it is tied to a major institution that is well known throughout American society. The schools are the natural choice so that children do not have to shift from place to place during the day and all children in a family (three and over) can be cared for at one place.

Predictably, Zigler's proposal is controversial but it is stirring people to think in new directions. Zigler's plan takes seriously the pressing child care needs of the American family, as well as the need for an institutional basis for early intervention. As a practical matter, it will probably be necessary to achieve collaboration among several institutions or systems in a particular community — and the mix might well vary from one to another. But the needs Zigler's plan addresses are real, and they are not going to go away.

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ingfully provided, especially to poor children, without offering additional services. The fact that children who are hungry or malnourished have trouble learning underlies the National School Lunch and Child Care Food programs. By the same logic, children who have poor health services or whose parents cannot support them in their education will also have trouble in school. These facts have long been recognized in Head Start, which requires provision of a comprehensive program of educational and support services for children and their families.

In the preceding section, parent services and involvement were discussed. In addition to the critical parent component, services included in a comprehensive prekindergarten program include at least:

- health services such as screening for delays, physical examinations or other direct health services provided by a doctor, nurse or dentist;

- nutrition services, which means serving meals and snacks so that children are receiving the major portion of their daily requirements during the program's hours; and

- social services for children and families (usually provided by a social worker), e.g., referral to community or government agencies and services or assistance with obtaining services.

Of the states with direct service prekindergarten programs, most have at least one program targeted to at-risk or low-income children. Some of these require or recommend that comprehensive services be offered — New York, California, Illinois, South Carolina and others. Other states require fewer services. For instance, Texas, serving more than 50,000 children in over half of the state's local school districts and suffering from severe budget constraints, does not require the full range of comprehensive services.

Even where a fairly broad range of services are offered, most public school programs do not attain the standard of Head Start. For instance, most Head Start programs frequently use nurses and social workers; many also make frequent use of dentists and psychologists. In states requiring comprehensive services for prekindergarten programs, nurses commonly are used, social workers are rare, and dentists and psychologists never are used.

According to Bank Street's Public School Early Childhood Study: "If a good early childhood education program must deliver comprehensive services, most state prekindergarten programs are not doing well enough and none appear to be doing as much as Head Start programs." Since much of Head Start's success appears to be due to provision of comprehensive services, it is questionable that programs for at-risk children can be effective unless children and families receive these services. Given budget limitations, it is crucial for schools to collaborate and coordinate with other service providers to help meet the need for expanded services, as well as to reduce fragmentation in service delivery.

## The Impetus for Collaboration

Today, the fragmentation of service delivery is increasingly recognized and deplored. Limited resources at all levels are an added spur to collaboration. Nearly every recent piece of legislation — from large federal initiatives to small state bills — has called for the establishment of interagency or multidisciplinary committees to facilitate cross-agency planning. Other bills have encouraged full-day and full-year services for children, stressing the need for comprehensive services on another dimension.

Recognition of the interrelatedness of the problems facing families and children today — and the need for solutions that cut across institutional lines — is also apparent in recent foundation programs, in the work of scholars, in the professional organizations representing educators and human services providers, and in the corporate sector. Seeing how discontinuity and fragmentation in services erode quality and diminish impact, nearly every commission dealing with policies for helping children and families has called for cross-system collaboration.

The National Governors' Association, the National Association of State Boards of Education, the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, the Council of Chief State School Officers, and the National Black Child Development Institute, to name a few,

have all called for collaboration and for approaching the child and family in a more holistic way, looking at the whole range of interrelated needs as well as the family's strengths.

While everyone is talking collaboration these days, it is another matter to build and sustain meaningful collaboration. In the course of interagency efforts, school boards, principals and others in education will probably find that few outsiders understand how school systems work. This is not surprising, but it can cause a lot of friction.

When noneducators seem to have unreasonable expectations of the schools, it is often because they do not understand its constraints. For instance, health personnel often seek to take advantage of the schools' ready access to children in order to provide health services. But they may fail to recognize that the same compulsory attendance laws that give the schools this access make school personnel strictly accountable to parents and local school boards. Lacking this perspective, noneducators may not understand the need for schools to get parental permission for services to students or may fail to realize the power of a small number of vocal parents to derail a controversial program.

Rather than taking the defensive immediately when such an issue arises, the schools need to help outsiders understand school governance and constraints. At the same time, schools should remain flexible enough to alter customary ways of doing things in those cases where change is appropriate and useful.

By the same token, schools and local boards need to recognize their own limited knowledge of the intricacies of human services systems and community agencies. With the painful awareness that the schools on their own cannot succeed in educating children who are suffering from a host of "extracurricular problems" at home and in the community, educators are recognizing the need to learn more about other systems and agencies that provide help to families and children.

A form of collaboration found to be productive in a number of communities is placing social services personnel at the school to serve families and children. For instance, the New Beginnings program in San Diego is placing a social worker at an elementary school to serve as a "family services advocate" — to investigate families' needs for additional services and the barriers they experience in working with the existing system.

In Kent County, Michigan, the Department of Social Services funds school-based outreach workers who follow up on attendance problems in the early elementary grades. When a child is absent, the worker telephones or visits the family to find out why and help resolve any problem. Attendance has improved dramatically. A big reason for the effectiveness of this approach is the improved coordination between the school and social services personnel. And the sharing of costs makes it possible for much needed services to be provided.

In attempting to improve collaboration, schools and communities may profit from experience they are acquiring as they carry out the mandate to cooperate in serving preschool handicapped children. For children ages 3 to 5 with handicapping conditions, the schools are responsible for coordinating the full range of services, including educational, health and social services. A governor's interagency council is a prerequisite for federal funding for preschool special education services. In the struggle to improve interagency cooperation in serving young children and families, schools and community agencies can learn from their successes and setbacks in working towards coordinated service delivery for handicapped preschoolers and their families.

Collaboration pays off for everyone, but it takes time and effort upfront. In order for leaders to initiate collaborative ventures and for district and school staff to cooperate with them, collaboration must be recognized as part of the "real work" of these individuals and must be rewarded accordingly — with good performance evaluations, salary increases, promotions and authority.

## Staff Issues

It is sometimes assumed that teaching younger children is easier than teaching school-age children or that anyone who knows how to teach elementary school can teach preschool with little or no additional training. Nothing could be farther from the truth.

# Box 4-4
# Meeting Community Needs in New Ways

The South Central Children's Center in Seattle offers preschool, day care, extended day, and drop-in care programs for children from 2 1/2- to 11-years old. Preschool children participate in morning or afternoon sessions from September to June for which parents pay from $40 to $65 a month. Parents whose children are enrolled in full care pay about $240 a month, and those whose children are in extended day care pay from $140 to $195 a month. The drop-in rate is $2 per hour. Teachers are trained in early childhood education and participate in ongoing staff development. The staff:child ratio does not exceed 1:10.

Thornton District 205 in Chicago is one of a growing number of districts offering an infant care program for teenage mothers. The Chicago program serves three purposes. First, it makes staying in school more feasible for teenage mothers; without such programs their dropout rate is high. Second, the infant care program aims to improve children's development and well-being over the long term by teaching parenting skills to their adolescent parents. Finally, the program provides training for students interested in working in the early childhood field.

Parents in Pomona, California, have a smorgasbord of options for child care and education at various district schools. They can even get such extras as infant and toddler care, night care as late as midnight, care for mildly ill children, and emergency respite care for families under stress. The multi-faceted program is run by the Pomona Unified School District. Funding comes principally from several programs within the California State Department of Education, Head Start, Child Protective Services, the Child Care Food Program, and parents.

The Arlington County, Virginia, school system gave school employees a $40,000 line of credit to help them start a child care center in a renovated elementary school building. Operating as a private non-profit corporation, the center serves around 60 children from infants through 5-year-olds. Tuition covers the budget (except for the director's salary, paid by the school system as part of employee benefits). Evening and weekend care is available for adult students at the local career center. Besides caring for enrolled children, The Children's School provides drop-in care on a daily fee basis for parents whose usual child care arrangements fall through. School principals report a decline in employee absences since the center started. [A center for employees' children might be a good way for a district to get into early childhood/child care on a limited scale before initiating a broader program].

As of September 1989, New Jersey is sponsoring a pilot program, the Urban Prekindergarten Program (UPP), which provides full-day education, child care, and social and health services to disadvantaged children in four urban districts. UPP is collaboratively administered by the departments of education and human services with an annual budget of $4 million for services to approximately 1,000 3-and 4-year-olds. The programs in Camden and Jersey City are operating under the auspices of the local boards of education, and those in New Brunswick and East Orange are operated by Head Start agencies.

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As discussed in the section on Developmentally Appropriate Education for Young Children, early childhood education is quite different from elementary education and every bit as demanding for teachers. This is why quality programs for young children require teachers with specialized early childhood training and experience in teaching the age group. The teaching staff, in turn, must be supported by administrators who are knowledgeable about preschool children and sound early childhood practice. Years of research have made it clear that staff do a better job of working with young children when they have specialized training in early childhood and child development. In fact, the National Day Care Study (1979) found that only one teacher characteristic clearly was related to program effectiveness: the amount of early childhood training.

### Qualifications

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) recently specified the following qualifications for early childhood teachers:

- college-level specialized preparation that includes a foundation in child development theory and research
- current knowledge of child development and its application to early childhood education practice
- practical experience teaching the age group

Endorsing the importance of these qualifications, the NASBE Task Force on Early Childhood Education noted that some communities may find it difficult to hire teachers who meet the school certification requirements and also have experience with preschoolers. The Task Force recommends that teachers lacking practical experience with the age group, no matter what credentials they have, should be supervised and supported by a qualified master teacher with appropriate experience.

The current situation with regard to teacher qualifications is documented by the Public School Early Childhood Study (Mitchell, 1988). Of the states with early childhood programs, about half require teachers to have early childhood certification, and most require an early childhood bachelor's degree. Teachers in these programs often have experience working with young children, but such experience is rarely required.

### Staff development

If the public schools are going to expand to provide prekindergarten programs, an extensive training program — both preservice and inservice — will be needed. In many states, preservice certification requirements appropriate for early childhood teachers will need to be developed. Improved and expanded higher education training programs for early childhood teachers will also be needed. Among the requirements for early childhood teachers should be coursework on child development and working with parents, along with a supervised teaching practicum with the age group.

What should inservice teacher training be like? Among other groups, the NASBE Task Force on Early Childhood Education recommends that inservice training should be quite different from what exists in many districts now: "All too often substantial sums are spent by schools and other early childhood programs in a series of disconnected workshops led by outside experts. We believe more effective staff development programs are characterized by a long-term plan developed with substantial staff involvement. Staff development should also provide ongoing feedback to teachers based on extensive observation of classroom practice by persons well-trained in early childhood" (for an example of such training, see Box 4-5).

Ongoing inservice training will be needed for early childhood teachers, for administrators, and for support personnel whose work will now include younger children (e.g., speech therapists, curriculum specialists, psychologists).

As social services personnel and other non-school staff are increasingly engaged in cooperative efforts with the schools to provide services to young children and their families, joint staff development will be useful in many situations. Teachers, administrators and other school staff need to know more about how such agency staff do their jobs and vice versa. And many inservice training topics (e.g., identifying and assisting families under stress) are relevant

to all staff who will be working with the children and their families, inside and outside the schools.

### Compensation, recruitment and retention

Expanded early childhood programs in the public schools will require more teachers, and already there is a teacher shortage in many communities. Moreover, staff turnover rates in preschool programs are very high, averaging 40 percent nationally in child care centers. A high turnover rate is problematic with teachers at any grade level because it means inexperienced staff. But a high level of staff turnover is a particular problem for young children, who suffer serious disruption when a familiar teacher or aide is replaced by a new person. Among the reasons for high turnover are low salaries and poor benefits and the lack of viable career ladders.

Part of the solution to ensuring an adequate supply of good teachers, of course, is adequate compensation. In the states providing funds for preschool programs, most teachers are on the same pay scale as other district teachers. But in some public school preschool programs, early childhood staff continue to receive lower salaries than other staff with similar experience, training and credentials. This salary disparity — largely due to inadequate financial support for preschool programs — causes problems including recruitment difficulties, high staff turnover, and low staff morale.

In early childhood programs outside the schools, the compensation picture is far bleaker. For full-time work, teachers in these programs on average earn less than half of what elementary school teachers earn. Across the country, federally subsidized centers pay more than centers that depend on fees from parents, and nonprofit programs pay more than profit-making programs.

The low level of compensation for early childhood staff outside the public schools is relevant to the schools too. For one thing, low pay causes a shortage in the total pool of early childhood staff, which eventually affects all early childhood programs.

The lack of a well-defined and consistent career ladder for early childhood staff is another factor working against staff recruitment and retention. The NASBE Task Force on Early Childhood Education recommended that schools and other early childhood programs collaborate to develop training standards and roles and responsibilities that provide some progression for early childhood professionals across program sponsorship.

### Staff: child ratios and class size

The kind of classroom that is developmentally appropriate for young children (described on pp. 17 and 19) clearly is not feasible with one teacher and 30 children. Beyond this common sense perception, it has been documented that staff:child ratio does have a significant impact on the quality of programs. The National Day Care Study found that varying ratios between 1:5 and 1:10 had little effect on program quality, but above 1:10 quality deteriorates. Specifically, children show less persistence, interest, and participation in activities.

In accordance with these data and other supporting studies, the National Association for the Education of Young Children in 1987 recommended a ratio of no more than 10 children (4- or 5-year-olds) per adult, with gradual increases in the number of children with age.

A substantial consensus has developed for the 1:10 ratio as the outside limit, though it is still opposed by many in the private proprietary sector, which generates higher profits by allowing more children per adult, and by those in the states who argue that it is more important to serve a larger number of children, even with less favorable ratios. Research indicating that positive outcomes drop off rapidly as the number of children per adult climbs, e.g. The National Day Care Study, suggests the importance of maintaining low adult:child ratios, even if fewer children can be served. When low adult:child ratios are discarded, early childhood programs are less likely to help the children in any significant way.

Total class size makes a difference as well, the National Day Care Study found; a class of 30 with three adults is not equivalent to a class of 20 with two adults. Smaller groups reduce distractions and chaos and allow each teacher or aide to know all the children better. A class of 20 children with two teachers or a teacher and an aide is a frequent and reasonable pattern for 4-year-olds.

### Staff needs for rural areas

In rural and remote areas where children are widely dispersed, it is generally not feasible to bring children to a center-based program; travelling long distances by bus or van is not a good option for very young children. Home-based education for children and parents is an alternative that Head Start has found effective in these areas. Trained home visitors work with parents to increase parenting skills and introduce learning activities that parents can do with children. In some areas, children and mothers are brought together monthly for a "socialization" experience to reduce the sense of isolation. To provide preschool education for young children in rural areas, public schools may need to consider hiring and training "home educators"; the demands of this role would clearly differ in certain respects from that of the classroom teacher, especially in the greater emphasis on working with parents on a one-to-one basis.

## Assessment Issues

Schools traditionally have relied on tests to determine what children have learned. Tests are designed to sample an individual's information and skills; they assume that an individual who responds correctly to questions has mastered the knowledge while an individual who fails to respond correctly has not. Using tests in this way with young children is extremely problematic.

First, the young child's major developmental task is not to acquire information but to build fundamental cognitive structures, and these structures are hard to assess from a sampling of surface behaviors. For example, a child may be able to count and yet not have grasped the important underlying concepts. Likewise, he may have grasped these concepts and yet not be able to name the numbers "one, two, three...."

Second, preschool children are more subject to emotional shifts and attention lapses than older children, which makes it difficult to obtain a valid assessment of what they can do. Nor has their social development advanced to the point where they will necessarily exert themselves to please an examiner. Added to these limitations is the enormous individual variation in the rate and pattern of development, which make it risky to say that a young child is not progressing at a normal rate simply because of his performance at one point in time.

Given these problems, the practice of routinely administering a standardized screening or readiness test as the sole criterion for admittance to kindergarten or promotion to first grade is a highly dubious one. When screening tests are used for early tracking or retention, the child's self-esteem may be impaired. There is a special risk for low-income and limited English proficient children, who are more likely to test below their ability level. And there is always the danger of early childhood programs becoming test-driven.

For all these reasons, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and many early childhood educators counsel against the use of such tests to screen or place young children. States are taking heed. The Arizona legislature has limited standardized testing of first graders to a sample while alternative means of assessment are being developed. The Georgia School Boards Association has opposed the formal use of school readiness tests. North Carolina has chosen to postpone the use of standardized testing, at least until children are better able to cope with test-taking and the results will be more reliable. California's school readiness task force has called for drastically altered assessment methods as part of a plan for an appropriate program for 4 to 6-year-olds.

This does not mean that readiness tests and other assessment measures have no legitimate uses. For instance, a good readiness test may be used to assess where a classroom of children is as a group in order to plan the pace and level of learning activities for them. Or it may be one of several tools, including observations, that gives a teacher a preliminary idea of each child's strengths and weaknesses and provides a starting point for planning to meet the child's needs.

## Facilities Implications

During the late 1970s, many districts experienced a decline in enrollment, which left classrooms available for the development of preschool programs. But today there are many

# Box 4-5
# Watch-and-Do Staff Development

An innovative staff development system known as the Early Learning Support Network, developed in Maryland, has been a great success with participants. The support network gives teachers (also principals or teaching assistants) from anywhere in the state the opportunity for two-day "field experiences" in which they observe and work closely with the teaching staff at one of the model early childhood programs designated as support centers. Prior to the field experience, the visiting team defines the types of changes it wants to make. The field experience typically follows this schedule:

- Day 1, A.M.: The visiting team observes the program in operation, paying particular attention to those aspects of the program that relate to the specified purposes of their visit. They take notes and record questions for later discussion.

- Day 1, P.M.: The visiting team and Center teacher meet. The Center teacher answers questions about the program and provides theoretical and practical information to help the visiting team understand and acquire new skills/strategies. The Center teacher and visiting team plan cooperatively for the following day. The visiting team gathers and prepares materials needed to implement the plan.

- Day 2, A.M.: The visiting team practices the new skills/strategies while the Center teacher observes. during the last part of the morning, the visiting and Center teams implement the program together.

- Day 2, P.M.: The visiting team and Center teacher meet. The Center teacher gives the visitors feedback about their effectiveness in using the new skills/strategies and helps them transfer the skills/strategies to their own program. Together the Center teacher and the visiting team develop an action plan for implementation at the home school.

The teacher shares the action plan with the principal and/or central office support staff, and they agree on a date that implementation can be observed. After observing the classroom, the principal and/or central office staff provide feedback to further help the teacher integrate the new strategies into daily practice.

Centers selected as support centers are either NAEYC-accredited or in the process of acquiring accreditation. Each is strong in several of the skill areas identified as needing improvement in programs around the state. For instance, one objective of the center in Elkton, Maryland is "to model the use of the 'plan, do, and reflect' approach to children's self-initiated activities in learning centers."

All participants — both visitors and support center staff — are very enthusiastic about the program. As the developer and director of the program, Dr. Ginger Eckroade notes, "Early childhood teachers are particularly isolated because there's usually only one, maybe two, in a school. They really need the contact with their peers and the chance to learn from each other."

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districts that lack extra classrooms to accommodate preschool programs.

Even when districts have empty classrooms, they may find it difficult to make the renovations required by facility codes for younger age groups. Many schools lack appropriate outdoor space and equipment for young children as well.

States providing funds for preschool programs often fail to include money for renovating or developing adequate facilities. A New Jersey School Boards Association report estimates that across New Jersey more than 5,300 rooms would be required to accommodate full-day preschool classes (or 2,650 for half-day classes), assuming a maximum of 15 children per class. Other states face facility needs of similar proportions.

Districts that want to develop early childhood programs should examine all options to provide the necessary facilities. If there are no unused classrooms in the elementary school, there may be some in the middle school or high school. Other options include community-based facilities that are currently under-utilized or space in an adjoining district that may be willing to cooperatively sponsor an early childhood program.

It is important to convince the federal government and the states to provide grants and low interest loans for facility renovation. School boards should advocate such action and keep informed about available funds.

The business community is another potential source of assistance. The private sector may find facilities for young children a particularly appealing kind of investment because they make a visible and lasting contribution.

Before any construction is done, of course, those planning the facilities need to be familiar with the special needs of early childhood classrooms, beginning with the applicable facility code. As plans are developed, visits should be made to early childhood programs with well-designed classrooms and playgrounds. Participation of parents and, of course, early childhood teachers, contributes to this planning process. The National Association for the Education of Young Children is a useful resource for information on creating developmentally appropriate facilities for young children.

## Costs and Compromises in Funding Early Childhood Education

We have been looking at the various elements of high-quality early childhood education programs. What do they add up to in costs? Determining costs of good early childhood programs is a slippery business, partly because of cost variation among states and among regions within states. This variation is primarily a function of differences in wages and facilities. Rents in urban areas can inflate costs enormously. Because of such variation, states or districts need to examine local cost conditions rather than relying on national figures.

Obviously, cost variation is also a function of differences in the operating hours of different programs. A half-day program (usually two and a half hours) for the 180-day school year is operating 450 hours a year, while a full-day program running for the same hours as the elementary grades would be about 1,080 hours a year. To cover the hours of working parents, a center would need to be open for about nine hours a day for about 50 weeks — a total of 2,250 hours a year. In other words, a full-time child care program operates for far more hours than a half-day preschool and thus has a higher cost per child.

There is also great variation in the budget items that programs include in their cost figures. Teachers' pay is always included, and usually materials. But other necessary costs may not be charged to a program and thus not appear in its cost estimates. For example, if administrative and maintenance costs of preschool programs run by school districts come out of the elementary school budget, rent and utility expenses may not be reported for the preschool program. Citing cost per child or comparing different programs' cost per child is only meaningful when one specifies what expenses are included — as well as what services are provided.

Services that programs provide to children and families vary tremendously. Some provide transportation; others do not. In some programs children bring their own lunches or pay for their food; others provide food, ranging from a single snack to two meals and two snacks. Programs also vary widely in the health screening and

# Table 4.1
# Early Childhood Programs: Annual Costs Per Child Under Alternative Assumptions

| Ratio of Teachers to Students | Teacher Salaries: Current Average Childcare Teacher | Teacher Salaries: Average Elementary Teacher |
|---|---|---|
| | $12,800 | $24,500 |
| 1:20 | $1,443 | $2,028 |
| 1:15 | $1,656 | $2,436 |
| 1:10 | $2,083 | $3,253 |

This table assumes the following fixed costs:

| | |
|---|---|
| Other personnel costs | $373 |
| Space costs | $130 |
| Materials | $130 |
| Miscellaneous costs | $100 |

These costs may vary, but the effect of their variation on total annual costs per child is much less than that of teacher salaries or teacher:student ratios.

Source: *CPRE Policy Briefs*, Center for Policy Research in Education, October, 1987.

services they provide. The program may pay social workers to provide services to children and families — as in the case of some Head Start programs — or their own human services agencies may pay them.

Personnel decisions have a major impact on the cost of early childhood programs, averaging around 69 percent of total resources. Here we come up against two inescapable facts: (1) the higher the cost per teacher, the higher the cost per child; and (2) the fewer children per teacher, the higher the cost per child.

To ensure quality instruction, we must spend enough on teachers to attract and retain competent staff and to allow a low staff:child ratio, particularly for young children. Yet if a state or local district decides to keep the staff:child ratio low and salaries high, it can serve fewer children with a given level of funding.

Because so many factors affect cost, it is impossible to say what a "typical" early childhood program might cost. But available figures can provide some guidance about general magnitudes. Even though data on costs are poor, it is possible to build representative budgets to consider the trade-offs among early childhood programs. Table 4.1 presents annual costs per child for a half-day program under alternative assumptions about salary and teacher:child ratio; health, nutritional and social services are not included.

In 1988 Head Start estimated cost per child on a national basis, with substantial variations from program to program, as $2,592. The Perry Preschool Program (see Box 2-1), which has received so much publicity for reporting reduction in rates of special education placement, retention, teen pregnancy, crime, unemployment, and use of welfare — all costly to taxpayers — had a per-child cost of $6,187 (in 1986 dollars).

Most Head Start programs and the Perry Preschool Program are half-day programs. For full-day, publicly subsidized child care, California reports an annual cost per child ranging from $2,108 for the lowest cost program to $6,202 for the highest cost program, with an average of $4,525 per child across all programs (in 1986 dollars).

As a point of comparison, the average expenditure per child in public elementary and secondary schools was $3,977 in 1986-87. The rough similarity of this figure to per child costs reported by preschools masks two important differences: elementary school salaries are much higher than salaries in preschools and child care programs outside the school system, while staff:child ratios are much lower. If ratios in public school preschool programs are maintained in the appropriate range around 1:10 and salaries are comparable to those for elementary teachers, the costs of early childhood education programs can be expected to be higher than the current average cost of children in elementary school.

## Where Will the Money Come From?

In response to NSBA's recent Federation Member Survey on Early Childhood Education/Child Care, funding was identified by every responding state as a "major impediment to districts in the state establishing early childhood education programs or child care." With their budgets already stretched, local school districts are concerned that they may be required to provide prekindergarten programs but not given sufficient funds to do so.

NSBA has recommended (in Resolution 2.1.19) that "school district prekindergarten programs should not be mandated by other governmental units and that other public and private agencies should contribute appropriate services and funding for such programs." Further, (in Resolution 2.1.33) NSBA states the belief that "any federal legislation should recognize that child care is beyond the local school district's educational responsibilities and should thus be discretionary, with no additional regulatory or financial obligations on school districts."

Some states, including New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Maine, have used their existing school aid formulas to direct funds for preschool programs to districts. Children in preschool programs are included in average daily attendance counts, which determine the state's aid. Few districts have taken advantage of such potential revenues. Since state aid funds only a fraction of total costs in K-12 programs and the rest must come from local revenues, the use of existing school aid formulas appeals most to wealthy districts that are strongly committed to early childhood education and innovation.

## Box 4-6
## Business-Financed Facilities at the Work Site: Satellite Learning Centers

Even without serving prekindergarten children, many schools these days are bulging at the seams. Adding new space -- not to mention creating developmentally appropriate facilities for younger children -- is prohibitively expensive for many school systems. Other systems, remembering the last building boom -- and the empty schools that followed it -- hesitate to commit dollars to new facilities until they are certain about long-term needs. How can children be served without building new schools?

One of the brightest ideas for dealing with this problem comes from Dade County, Florida: elementary schools located at work sites. These "satellite learning centers" -- the brainchild of Dr. Joseph Fernandez, who was Dade County Superintendent when he conceived the idea -- are run by the school system in quarters provided by business. The school system gets additional classrooms without any capital outlay, and the businesses get a popular perk to offer to employees.

The elementary school closest to each satellite acts as the "host school" -- its principal and administrative staff work closely with the teachers at the satellite.

The three centers now in operation -- at American Bankers Insurance Group, Miami International Airport (with 24-hour child care provided for the airport's 24-hour workforce), and the Miami-Dade Community College -- collectively serve about 160 children in grade K-2. This frees up an equivalent number of places in existing Dade County schools. The three centers will soon be joined by others, such as one site at a hospital.

The satellite learning center dovetails neatly with the child care center operated by each employer -- very convenient for parents and great for kids, who get to be in class with the same children they know from the child care center.

Not only are these work-site classrooms helping Dade County deal with a large influx of students. They are highly popular with parents. Besides the convenience, parents love being able to have lunch with their children and work with them on school projects or drop in after school to see a child's drawing on the bulletin board.

As for employers, they are betting that satellite learning centers will help them to attract and retain employees and to reduce absenteeism and tardiness, as providing work-site child care already has been found to do. These payoffs make the dollars businesses spend on building new facilities an excellent investment.

For more information, contact:

Joseph T. Tekerman
Executive Assistant to the Superintendent
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Miami, FL 33132
(305) 995-1414 or 995-1480

An alternative is to devise a formula distinctive to early childhood programs, one that initially provides a higher level of support than existing formulas and perhaps including a greater inducement for poorer districts. Texas used this approach in funding its prekindergarten program, providing a matching grant with the state's share higher for poorer districts.

A means of stretching resources is collaboration between the schools and other agencies. Each partner has limited resources, but these can be put to better use when the various providers serving young children and their families work together. A major barrier to such coordination and collaboration is the inflexible nature of funding streams. Even when federal and state aid is available, the categorical nature of many funding programs for at-risk students limits the flexibility of local school districts in providing a broad range of services to students. A more coordinated system for funding programs and for delivery of services to young children and their families is needed at federal, state and local levels.

Private sector funding can play a significant role in the funding of early childhood programs in the schools. Both national and local business involvement may be helpful to local schools. For instance, in November 1989, IBM announced a $22 million initiative to help increase the supply of child care providers in communities where IBM employees live and work and to provide technical assistance to these providers. As part of this program, funding will be available for development and expansion of early childhood programs.

A local community example of private sector funding for early childhood education is the Cincinnati Youth Collaborative, spearheaded by Proctor & Gamble. It was organized by a corporate executive who wanted to make a positive change for children — the future adults and workers of the city. Nearly half the collaborative's budget comes from the business community, which committed $3.2 million over a three-year period. Corporate executives have worked closely with city officials and public school leaders in such initiatives as establishing prekindergarten programs for at-risk children at two Cincinnati elementary schools.

Box 4-6 describes another exciting example of how partnerships between businesses and schools in early childhood education offer important benefits to both parties.

It has been noted that private sector participation could be increased by such policy options as increasing tax credits to corporations for contributions to early childhood education and other programs to improve children's futures.

Another funding alternative is requiring parents to pay fees toward financing programs. The most likely system would be a sliding fee schedule based on income and providing greater subsidies to the poorest children. When child care is provided at the school, parents typically pay for this additional service. (The Zigler proposal, described in Box 4.3, includes a sliding fee scale for implementing child care as part of the public school system.) Child care funds for low-income children may be available to schools from sources such as the child care component of welfare reform programs.

These are the major issues and realities that must be considered in creating effective early childhood programs today. The next chapter looks at the implications of these issues for local school boards.

# CHAPTER V:
# IMPLICATIONS FOR LOCAL SCHOOL BOARDS

As we have seen, starting effective early childhood programs requires money and considerable effort. So why should school districts take on such programs? The rationale is that high-quality early childhood programs will help schools to succeed in educating children with whom they now are failing. Early childhood education can be cost-effective and politically smart for public schools.

A good early childhood program gives children enthusiasm for learning, responsiveness to teachers, and positive attitudes toward school that may carry over to later grades. Children are likely to enjoy and succeed in their first encounter with school when it takes place in the pressure-free early childhood classroom (and schools should make sure that their early childhood programs indeed are pressure free!). The value of a positive first experience with school applies to parents too, and the warm, informal atmosphere of early childhood programs helps put parents at ease. By establishing good parent-school relationships early, the school has a better chance of keeping up contact with parents as children progress through the later grades.

Preventing school problems by giving children a good start is easier than curing problems later. Today dropout rates are far too high, and even high school graduates often lack the skills needed for employment and financial independence. Schools, along with employers and communities, are recognizing the seriousness of these problems. It is children who are at an educational disadvantage from the start that are most likely to do poorly in school and most likely to drop out. Research evidence shows that preschool programs can reduce the damaging outcomes of poverty and other risk factors on children's school performance.

The research evidence, we should not forget, is based on high-quality preschool programs. There is no evidence to suggest that in helping poor children educationally "anything is better than nothing." But when a good early childhood program with comprehensive services is provided for at-risk children, there is evidence that they get off to a better start and show positive effects for many years. The effects include lower rates of special education services, grade retention, and dropping out (as well as reduction in crime, teenage pregnancy, and use of welfare services, if the small body of available research is borne out by additional research). All of these long-term outcomes translate into money saved and a more productive workforce. In other words, early childhood education can be cost-effective for schools and society.

Besides boosting cost-effectiveness, early childhood programs, particularly in conjunction with expanded child care options, can pay off in broadening community support for schools. Working parents with young children know how hard it is to find good care, and those with school-age children need child care arrangements that dovetail with the arrangements for their older children. Most would welcome the chance to have their children in a good educational program and have full-day care at the same place. By meeting the child care needs of parents and attracting parents who might otherwise enroll children in private programs, public school early childhood programs (especially those offering child care options) strengthen community support for public schools.

There is much to be gained from providing effective early childhood programs in schools. But to create an effective program requires careful thought and planning as well as vigorous action. In Chapter IV, we discussed the major issues that districts and schools must grapple with in shaping effective early childhood programs. Now let us turn to what school

boards need to do at the local level in order to start and maintain a strong early childhood program.

## School Boards' Role at the Community Level

Though momentum is building for the development of public school early childhood programs, there are those inside and outside the schools who are at odds with current early childhood initiatives. School boards need to recognize and address the negative attitudes that are likely to surface, such as:

- The school's role is to provide education — not to deal with health and social problems.
- Children under five belong at home — not in a school setting.
- Child care is the parents' responsibility.

The school board has a responsibility to increase public awareness of the need for more comprehensive programs for young children. Community members may need to learn about how social and health problems affect children's education and productivity — and the financial burden that educational failure places on the community. They may need to be informed of the educational and social benefits that can be achieved through quality comprehensive early childhood programs. In other words, one of the first roles of the school board may be to broaden community understanding of the value of early childhood education.

An important role for today's school board is building bridges between the school and those community groups and agencies that play a role or have an interest in providing for children and families. School boards should join with other providers serving young children and families, as well as other stakeholders such as the business community and parent representatives — taking the leadership in forming such a council if necessary. This community-wide planning council should do the following:

- Specify the array of services that young children and their families should receive.
- Assess the community with respect to provision of these services, that is, conduct a thorough needs assessment.
- Establish priorities in the needs that are not being met effectively.
- Discuss who can do what, identifying community resources and additional funding sources.
- Develop a coordinated action plan.
- Communicate the need for staying power — the first results could take 16-18 years.

If, having worked through this process, the school board decides to provide a prekindergarten program (or in the event that a preschool program is mandated), the board then proceeds to the next phase: creating an effective prekindergarten program. In Chapter IV, we discussed the major issues that arise in shaping effective early childhood programs. From these issues stem implications for action on the part of local school boards and the schools themselves. The actions identified in the following sections are not exhaustive lists that will apply in every situation. They are suggestions to help school boards get started in the process of developing their own prekindergarten programs. Each local school board will want to adapt and come up with its own steps and strategies as the process unfolds.

### Developmentally appropriate education

School boards should consider the following roles with respect to ensuring developmentally appropriate education for prekindergarten children:

- Develop a statement of philosophy, objectives and principles for early childhood programs to provide an overall framework for specific policies in curriculum, materials, staffing and staff development, assessment, and teacher evaluation (statements should also be developed at the school level). The statement should incorporate the essential elements of developmentally appropriate education.

which for preschoolers differs substantially from the usual elementary mode.

- Review the need for additional resources required to support developmentally appropriate early childhood education, e.g., more money for teacher salaries because of fewer children per teacher.

- Re-evaluate the K-3 program for developmental appropriateness and continuity. It may be advisable to make some changes so that there is a gradual transition in instructional methods. Also, children throughout the early grades appear to benefit from classroom experience with a lot of hands-on experience, peer interaction, child-initiated learning and other earmarks of early childhood education.

- Assign district leadership responsibility for the early childhood program to an administrator with training in child development and early childhood curriculum and teaching. Provide authority for this leader to shape district policy and support implementation efforts of teachers, principals, and parents.

- Encourage each school to educate parents on developmentally appropriate practice and on the school's philosophy and practices in early childhood education.

### Parent involvement and family education/support

To build a strong component of parent involvement and family education and support, these are some suggested roles for local school boards:

- Encourage the development of parent education programs, support groups and other activities to enhance parenting skills, enjoyment of parenting, and parents' involvement in children's education.

- Include parents in the community-wide planning council, school committees and other forums that elicit their input and contribute to self-confidence and empowerment.

- Cooperate with other groups in making routine home visits to build closer links to families and to foster parents' commitment to and involvement in their children's education.

- Cooperate with social services and other groups to establish workable systems for sharing information about children and families in need of help.

- Develop the long-term monitoring techniques to assess the effect of the family programs on dropout rates, attendance, retention, student self-esteem, and other important outcomes.

### Collaboration to provide comprehensive and integrated services

To promote the provision of comprehensive and integrated services to young children and their families, school boards need to collaborate with others in the community in the following ways:

- Participate actively in community coordinating bodies along with other agencies providing support services to children and families; if there is no such group, take the initiative in forming one.

- Work with existing early childhood programs in the community when planning new public school early childhood initiatives; take care not to take any action that undermines other community early child care programs.

- If assessment of community needs indicates a need for full-day child care (for school-age and younger children), work with other key agencies to provide resources to set up before- and after-school child care in the schools.

- Communicate with other service providers about how the schools operate and invite other providers to inform board members andschool personnel of the workings of systems and agencies serving children and families.

- Encourage funding for local child care resource and referral agencies and collaborate with them to increase effectiveness.

- Encourage innovative family support services with linkages to the public schools (e.g., cooperation in identifying children and families that need help, coordinated case management, follow-up).

- Develop coordination and referral procedures with local health and social service agencies to increase parents' knowledge and access to services.

- Offer to have the schools serve as a focal point for health and dental screening efforts.

- Participate in federal and state food programs and in efforts to expand the availability of these services.

- Provide time for school staff to work with relevant service agency personnel and with families.

### Staff

Numerous important issues concerning teachers and other staff require school board attention, including carrying out the following roles:

- Support the improvement and expansion of early childhood preservice training at colleges and universities, and encourage the hiring of teachers with early childhood preservice training and credentials. Curricula should include coursework on child development and working with parents, as well as a supervised teaching practicum with the age group.

- Provide ongoing inservice training for teachers, administrators and others who work with prekindergarten children. As part of the training program, teachers particularly benefit from observing good early childhood programs and from a mentor approach in which they get feedback from an experienced early childhood educator who observes them in the classroom.

- Encourage joint staff development sessions with staff members from other early childhood programs in the community and sessions with the staff of community agencies serving the same population of children and families.

- Facilitate recruitment to the field of early childhood education, for example, expose upper-grade students to early childhood education by giving credit for involvement in the school's early childhood program.

- Support compensation for public school early childhood teachers on the same pay scale as other elementary teachers.

- Set a standard for the maximum class size and staff:child ratio in all early childhood programs.

- Take active roles in professional groups representing young children and work to strengthen the prestige of early childhood educators within the public school community.

### Assessment

To ensure appropriate assessment in early childhood programs, the school board should:

- Discourage use of standardized tests for screening, tracking or promotion of young children, especially not as the sole assessment measure.

- Explore more developmentally oriented means of assessing children's progress and encourage schools to use multiple assessment measures, including teacher observation.

### Facilities

Providing an appropriate facility for an early childhood program may be easier said than done. The school board, together with school personnel and involved parents, should:

- Learn about the indoor and outdoor space and facility needs of early childhood programs.

- Consider any potential space in district schools which could be converted for preschool use — in secondary and middle schools as well as elementary schools.

- Consider collaboration with another district or use of other facilities in the community.

- For renovation or other construction costs, search out funding sources, such as state and federal grants and loans or contributions from the private sector.

### Funding

On the financial end of things, there are two major sets of roles for school boards: (1) helping to increase funding and in-kind resources for early childhood programs; and (2) making the best use of resources to meet the needs of young children.

School boards should encourage the participation and financial support of the private sector, which has a clear stake in the improvement of education in the community. Grants from foundations and from federal and state government should be pursued. In-kind contributions from business and community groups not only help reduce expense but increase community "ownership" of the program. Parent fees on a sliding scale are a viable source of funding for early childhood programs, particularly for extended hours of care. It is useful to survey parents to determine their child care needs and what they would be willing to pay for various services.

Besides increasing the level of funding, it is important to increase the coordination and flexibility of funding streams. The school board should do what it can to promote such coordination at the local level, as well as at state and federal levels.

Resources are always limited and quality early childhood programs cost money, so tough decisions inevitably must be made. The local school board has the task of working with schools to reach decisions about how resources will be allocated and what compromises will be made.

The first step will be to estimate costs of the various elements of the early childhood program — both the start-up costs and the ongoing expenses. Then as school board members, together with all participants in the planning process, look at potential services, staffing, space and other issues, they will be able to weigh the costs of different alternatives. Ultimately, a set of decisions and compromises will be reached, reflecting the particular priorities and constraints of the local community and school board.

## School Boards' Role at the State and Federal Levels

Using the state association as a primary resource, each local school board should continuously monitor state-level activity with respect to children in general and at-risk children and families in particular. This activity may include special commissions or task forces, legislative proposals, initiatives by the Governor's Office, interagency agreements, or other forms of action. New requirements affecting districts may be pending, and local boards as well as the state association will want to have input on these. From these sources may come changes in what is required of local districts; new funding policies, grants or subsidies to local districts; information about model early childhood programs across the state; and other relevant items. Each local school board should stay abreast of activity at the national level through frequent contact with the state association and the National School Boards Association.

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## Other Resources

**American Federation of Teachers ***
(AFT)
555 New Jersey Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20001
(202) 879-4400

AFT, a union of teachers, paraprofessionals, and other educational personnel, supports the concept of new initiatives in childcare and development under the jurisdiction of the public schools.

*Of special interest:* "Starting Off Right," American Teacher, May 1986, pp.1, 8-9. This article features high-quality preschool programs in the public schools.

**Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development ***
(ASCD)
125 N. West St.
Alexandria, VA 22314-2798
(703) 549-9110

In the summer of 1985, ASCD's Executive Council approved a long-range plan that included a three-year focus in the early childhood area. The purpose of the plan is to intensify Association attention to the issues related to providing quality instructional programs to children ages three to seven by helping school administrators, supervisor, policy makers, and other school leaders to better meet the needs of young children.

Available from ASCD: Audiotapes of keynote speakers at the ASCD Early Childhood Education in Public Schools mini-conference; *Educational Leadership*, November 1986; *Early Childhood Education: Curriculum Organization and Classroom Management* book and filmstrip set by Barbara Day; a three-part videotape series in the area of early childhood education; and National Curriculum Study Institutes in the area of early childhood education.

**ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education ***
(ERIC/EECE)
University of Illinois
805 W. Pennsylvania Ave.
Urbana, IL 61801

Part of ERIC, the national information system on education, ERIC/EECE collects and disseminates information related to children's development and education through early adolescence. The Clearinghouse contributes document and journal article abstracts to the ERIC database, prepares publications, and answers questions in its scope area.

Available from ERIC/EECE: "Resources from ERIC/EECE," a brochure describing current publications and products available from the Clearinghouse; "What Should young Children Be Learning?", an ERIC Digest by Lilian G. Katz, Clearinghouse director (both items free upon request).

ERIC Documents: Listed below are selected ERIC Documents (EDs) on public schools and early childhood education. They can be read on microfiche in many libraries and information

centers (contact ERIC/EECE for a list of ERIC microfiche collections in your state) or ordered in paper copy or microfiche from the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS), 3900 Wheeler Ave., Alexandria, VA 22304. For complete ordering information, call EDRS at (800) 227-3742, or consult the most recent issue of ERIC's monthly journal *Resources in Education*, published by the Government Printing Office; also available at many libraries. (RIE contains abstracts and indexes for ERIC documents. *Current Index to Journals in Education* (CIJE), ERIC's other abstract journal [prepared by the ERIC Clearinghouse and published by ORYX Press], provides annotations and indexes for education-related journal articles.)

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Ypsilanti, MI 48198-2898
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High/Scope is a non-profit research, development, and training organization with headquarters in Ypsilanti, Michigan. The Foundation's principal goals are to promote the learning and development of children from infancy through adolescence and to provide information and training for parents and teachers. High/Scope has conducted longitudinal research on the Ypsilanti/Perry Preschool Project to show the long-term positive effects of high-quality programs for preschool children.

Available from High/Scope: *High/Scope Resource*, a guide to the activities, products, and services of the Foundation, published three times a year by high Scope Press, a division of the Foundation (free; write High/Scope and request to be put on the mailing list); and "Policy Options for Preschool Programs," by Lawrence J. Schweinhart and Jeffrey J. Koshel. (High/Scope Early Childhood Policy Papers, No.5, $5; order directly from High/Scope; also available as ED 276 515, 45 pp.)

**Joining Forces**
Suite 379, Hall of the States
400 North Capitol Street
Washington, DC 20001
(202) 393-8159

This national initiative was started to help education and human service sectors work together to aid children and families at risk. Past and future activities include: providing forums for dialogue among systems; collecting and disseminating information on successful examples of collaboration at state and local levels; assisting states in the development and evaluation of collaborative approaches; and fostering supportive action at the national level.

Available from Joining Forces: *Joining Forces: A Report from the First Year*

**The National Association for the Education of Young Children ***
(NAEYC)
1834 Connecticut Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20009
(800) 424-2460

An association of more than 55,000 members, NAEYC offers a variety of services likely to be useful to public schools interested in adding an early childhood education component. NAEYC offers publications, videos, pamphlets and brochures on the education and care of children.

Available from NAEYC: "Good Teaching Practices for Four- and Five-Year-Olds" (brochure; single copes free for self-addressed, stamped envelope, or $.50 each, $10.00 for 100 copies); and "Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs: Serving Children Birth through Eight" ($5.00; Publication no. 224). Orders under $20 must be prepaid; publications catalog available upon request.

**National Association of Elementary School Principals ***
(NAESP)
1615 Duke Street
Alexandria, VA 22314
(703) 684-3345

NAESP offered the new training program "Administration of Early Childhood Programs" as part of its National Principals Academy courses in April 1988. Planned and presented in collaboration with the High/Scope Educational

Research Foundation, the workshop is being repeated on request. For more information, call NAESP or the High/Scope Developmental Services Office (313) 485-2000.

NAESP is also working on guidelines for early childhood education that are expected to be ready for distribution by the end of 1990. The guidelines are intended to help administrators establish a sound early childhood program in their schools.

**National Association of State Boards of Education**
(NASBE)
1012 Cameron Street
Alexandria, VA 22314
(703) 684-4000

NASBE is a nonprofit, private association that represents state and territorial boards of education. The association's objectives are to strengthen state leadership in education policymaking, promote excellence in the education of all students, advocate equality of access to educational opportunity, and assure responsible governance of public education. In 1987, NASBE formed a 25-member Early Childhood Education Task Force, which consulted with national experts at an initial meeting in Washington and heard testimony from state policymakers and program managers at four regional meetings. In October 1988, the task force issued its policy recommendations in a report, *Right from the Start*. NASBE is currently conducting a national search for programs exemplifying developmentally appropriate early childhood education.

Available from NASBE: *Right from the Start* report ($8; order directly from NASBE).

**National Black Child Development Institute ***
(NBCDI)
1463 Rhode Island Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20005
(202) 387-1281

NBCDI is an advocacy organization for black children and youth. Concerned that early childhood programs in urban public schools may be inadequate to nurture black children, NBCDI has prepared a set of recommendations for successful programs.

Available from NBCDI: "Safeguards: Guidelines for Establishing Programs for Four-Year-Olds in the Public Schools." ($6; order directly from NBCDI.)

**National Conference of State Legislatures ***
(NCSL)
1050 17th Street, Suite 2100
Denver, CO 80265

NCSL operates the Child Care/Early Childhood Education Project, funded by the Carnegie Foundation to provide technical assistance to states on child care and early education issues. Funds are used to set up statewide conferences and provide testimony in state legislatures on increasing support for early childhood programs. Each year, six states are selected for technical assistance and provided with a grant by NCSL.

Available from NCSL: "State Early Childhood Initiatives" (published March 1988; contact NCSL Publications Department for ordering information). This publication provides information on funding levels, numbers of children served, special characteristics of target groups, and connections to Head Start.

**North Central Regional Educational Laboratory***
(NCREL)
295 Emroy Ave.
Elmhurst, IL 60126
(312) 941-7677

NCREL is a federally funded regional education laboratory that has been investigating the problem of children at risk. Besides the publication listed below, other information on this subject is available on request.

Available from NCREL: "Students at Risk: Review of Conditions, Circumstances, Indicators, and Educational Implications" by Hariett Doss Willis (Order No. SAR-701; $6.00 with check or purchase order addressed to NCREL Publications Department.) Parts of the bibliography deal with preschool programs.

**National Education Association**
(NEA)
1201 16th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 822-7200

NEA's more than two million members include elementary and secondary teachers, higher education faculty, educational support personnel, and students preparing to become teachers. It has both state and local affiliates. NEA is a union and a professional association; it is active in educational research and provides an an instructional support system.

The NEA Professional Library, a large source of professional materials for classroom teachers and school administrators, has two recent publications pertinent to public school involvement with early childhood education: *Early Childhood at Risk: Actions and Advocacy for Young Children* by Victoria Jean Dimidjian ($7.95) and *Early Childhood Education in the Schools*, edited by Jerold P. Bauch ($19.95).

The January issue of NEA Today (pp. 22-27) featured an article by David Elkind titled, "Educating the Very Young: A Call for Clear Thinking." The article cited three recent and forthcoming books that discuss the education of young children: *Early Schooling: The National Debate*, Sharon Lynn Kagan and Edward Zigler (Yale University Press, 1987); *Engaging the Minds of Young Children: The Project Approach*, Lilian G. Katz and S. Chard (Ablex, in press); and *Miseducation: Preschoolers at Risk*, David Elkind (Knopf, 1987).

**The Regional Laboratory (For Educational Improvement for the Northeast and Islands) ***
290 S. Main Street
Andover, MA 01810
(617) 470-1080

The Regional Laboratory, operated by The Network in Andover, Massachusetts, is one of the federally funded regional education laboratories and research centers. The publication listed below is one of a series of five information packets dealing with serving at-risk children and youth.

Available from The Regional Laboratory: "Good Beginnings for Young Children: Early Identification of High Risk Youth and Programs that Promote Success" by Janet M. Thleeger ($2.25 plus $2.50 and handling; prepaid orders only; publication No. 9504). This publication is a brief overview of research with a resource bibliography that summarizes available programs for at-risk children.

**Southern Association on Children Under Six ***
(SACUS)
Box 5403
Brady Station
Little Rock, AR 72215
(501) 227-6404

SACUS is a nonprofit professional education organization of 13,000 members. SACUS works on behalf of young children and their families. Its major functions include the dissemination of information about young children and provision of inservice development opportunities.

Available from SACUS: "Position Statement on Quality Four Year Old Programs in Public Schools" (single copies available free of charge; order directly from SACUS; also available as ED 272 272).

The listings that are indicated with an asterisk (*) are from Dianne Rothenberg, "Resources for Public Schools" from *A Resource Guide to Public School Early Childhood Programs*. Reprinted with permission of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. Copyright © 1988 by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. All rights reserved.

## Notes

# ABOUT NSBA

The National School Boards Association is located in Alexandria, Virginia, within the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area. NSBA is a not-for-profit organization whose primary mission is the general advancement of public education through the unique North American system of representative and participatory government whereby elementary and secondary school policy is decided by local school board members who are directly accountable to the community. Over 95% are elected and the remainder are appointed by elected officials.

Federation Members of NSBA are the 49 state associations of local school boards, the Hawaii State Board of Education, and the boards of education in the District of Columbia and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

NSBA promotes the quality of public elementary and secondary schools through services to its Federation Members and local school boards; by increasing school board impact on federal education laws and regulations; and by maintaining liaison with other education organizations and governmental authorities.

In so doing, NSBA represents the interest of school boards before Congress, federal agencies and in court cases relating to education; provides education and training programs for school boards members; provides school district management services, and offers to school boards a variety of other services including annual an convention and the Institute for the Transfer of Technology to Education (ITTE).

The NSBA Federal Relations Network, composed of up to three school board members in each Congressional district, plays a major role in NSBA's education advocacy program in Washington, D.C.

Three major publications are produced by NSBA: the award-winning monthly magazine, The American School Board Journal; the monthly magazine, The Executive Educator; and a fortnightly newspaper, School Board News.

Seven constituent groups within the Federation play a significant role in NSBA's efforts to serve Federation Member and school board needs:

- The Council of Urban Boards of Education focuses on the unique needs of urban school boards.
- The Large District Forum serves the special needs of large but non-urban school districts.
- The Rural District Forum serves rural and small enrollment districts.
- The Federation Member Executive Directors' NSBA Liaison Committee links the top executives within the Federation.
- The Council of School Attorneys focuses on issues of school law.
- The Conference of School Boards Association Communicators serves NSBA and Federation Member communications professionals.
- The Federal Policy Coordinators Network focuses on the administration of federally funded programs.

NSBA maintains close liaison with other groups, such as the National Caucus of Black School Board Members, National Caucus of Hispanic School Board Members, National Caucus of Young School Board Members, National Association of State Boards of Education, American Association of School Administrators, Forum of Education Organization Leaders (FEOL), Education Leaders Consortium (ELC), National Governors' Association, National Conference of State Legislatures, and Education Commission of the States.

Founded in 1940, NSBA represents the nation's 97,000 school board members who, in turn, represent the more than 40 million public school children in the U.S., which account for about 90% of all elementary and secondary school students in the nation. Over 2,000 local school boards are NSBA Direct Affiliates.

NSBA policy is determined by a 150-member Delegate Assembly composed of active school board members across the country. Translating this policy into action programs is a Board of Directors consisting of 21 members and three ex-officio members. The executive director administers NSBA programs, assisted by a professional staff.

NSBA

LEADERSHIP FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION

**National School Boards Association**
**1680 Duke Street**
**Alexandria, VA 22314**
**(703) 838-6722**